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William Trevor

Poppy and Alice

EVERY SUMMER SINCE THE WAR the two couples had gone to Southend in September, staying in Mrs Roope's Prospect Hotel. They'd known each other since childhood: Poppy and Albert, Alice and Lenny. They'd been to the same schools, they'd all been married in the summer of 1938. They rented houses in the same street, Paper Street, S.E.4, Poppy and Albert Number Ten and Alice and Lenny Number Forty-one. They were all in their mid-fifties now, and except for Poppy they'd all run to fat a bit. Len was a printer, Albert was employed by the London Electricity Board, as a cable-layer. Every night the two men had a few drinks together in the Cardinal Wolsey in Northbert Road, round the corner from Paper Street. Twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, the wives went to Bingo. Alice's children—Beryl and Ron—were now married and had children of their own. Poppy's son George, married also, had gone to Canada in 1969.

Poppy was very different from Alice. Alice was timid, she'd never had Poppy's confidence. In middle age Poppy was a small, wiry woman with glasses, the worrying kind you might think to look at her, only Poppy didn't worry at all. Poppy was always laughing, nudging Alice when they were together on a bus, drawing attention to some person who amused her. "Poppy Edwards, you're a holy terror!" Miss Curry of Tatterall Elementary School had pronounced forty years ago, and in lots of ways Poppy was a holy terror still. She'd been a slap-happy mother and was a slap-happy wife, not caring much what people thought if her child wasn't as meticulously turned out as other children, or if Albert's sandwiches were carelessly made. Once, back in 1941 when Albert was in the army, she'd begun to keep company with a man who was an air-raid warden, whose bad health had prevented him from joining one of the armed forces. When the war came to an end she was still involved with this man and it had seemed likely then that she and Albert would not continue to live together. Alice had been worried about it all, but then, a month before Albert was due to be demobbed, the man had been knocked down by an army truck in Holborn and had instantly died. Albert remained in ignorance of everything, even though most people in Paper Street knew just what had been going on and how close Albert had come to finding himself wifeless. In those days Poppy had been a slim, small girl in her twenties, with yellow hair that looked as though it had been peroxided but which in fact hadn't, and light-blue mischievous eyes. Alice had been plumper, dark-haired and reliable-looking, pretty in her nice-girl way. Beryl and Ron had not been born yet.

During the war, with their two husbands serving in Italy and Africa together, Poppy had repeatedly urged Alice to let her hair down a bit, as she herself was doing with the air-raid warden. They were all going to be blown up, she argued, and if Alice thought that Lenny and Albert weren't chancing their arms with the local talent in Italy and Africa then Alice had definitely another think coming. But Alice, even after Lenny confessed that he'd once chanced his arm through physical desperation, couldn't bring herself to emulate the easy attitudes of her friend. The air-raid warden was always producing friends for her, men whose health wasn't good either, but Alice chatted politely to each of them and made it clear that she didn't

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wish for a closer relationship. With peace and the death of the air-raid warden, Poppy calmed down a bit, and the birth of her child eighteen months later calmed her down further.

BUT EVEN SO she was still the same Poppy, and in late middle-age when she suggested that she and Alice should take up dancing again the idea seemed to Alice to be just like all the other ideas Poppy had had in the past: when they were seven, to take Mrs Grounds' washing off her line and peg it up on Mrs Bond's; when they were ten, to go to Woolworth's with Davie Rickard and slip packets of carrots from the counter into the pockets of his jacket; at fifteen, to write anonymous letters to every teacher who'd ever had anything to do with them; at sixteen, to cut the hair of people in the row in front of them in the Regal Cinema. "Dancing?" Alice said. "Oh Poppy, whatever would they say?"

Whatever would the two husbands say, she meant, and the other wives of Paper Street and Beryl and Ron? Going to Bingo was one thing, and quite accepted. Going dancing at fifty-four was a different kettle of fish altogether. Before their marriages they had often gone dancing: they had been taken to dance-halls on Saturday nights by the men they later married, and by other men. Every June, all four of them went dancing once or twice in Southend, even though the husbands increasingly complained that it made them feel ridiculous. But what Poppy had in mind now wasn't the Grand Palais in Southend or the humbler floors of thirty years ago, or embarrassed husbands, or youths treading over your feet: what Poppy had in mind was afternoon dancing in a place in the West End, without the husbands or anyone else knowing a thing about it. "Tea-time foxtrots," Poppy said. "The Tottenham Court Dance-Rooms. All the rage, they are." And in the end Alice agreed.

They went quite regularly to the Tottenham Court Dance-Rooms, almost every Tuesday. They dressed up as they used to dress up years ago. With discretion they applied rouge and eye-shadow. Alice put on a peach-coloured corset in an effort to trim down her figure a bit, and curled the hair that had once been fair and now was grey. It looked a bit frizzy when she curled it the way it had never done when she was a girl, but although the sight of it sometimes depressed her she accepted the middle-aged frizziness because there was nothing she could do about it. Poppy's hair had become rather thin on the top of her head, but she didn't seem to notice and Alice naturally didn't mention the fact. In middle age Poppy always kept her grey hair dyed a brightish shade of chestnut, and when Alice once read in a magazine that excessive dyeing eventually caused a degree of baldness she didn't mention it either, fearing that in Poppy's case the damage was already done. On their dancing afternoons they put on headscarves and pulled their coats carefully about them, to hide the finery beneath. Poppy wore spectacles with gold-coloured trim on the orange frames, her special-occasion spectacles she called them. They always walked quickly away from Paper Street.

In the dance-rooms they had tea on the balcony as soon as they arrived, at about a quarter-to-three. There was a lot of scarlet plush on the balcony, and scarlet lights. There were little round tables with paper covers on them, for convenience. When they'd had tea and Danish pastries and a few slices of Swiss roll they descended one of the stair-cases that led to the dance-floor and stood chatting by a pillar. Sometimes men came up to them and asked if one or other would like to dance. They didn't mind if men came up or not, or at least they didn't mind particularly. What they enjoyed was the band, usually Leo Ritz and his Band, and looking at the other dancers, and the scarlet plush and having tea. Years ago they'd have danced together, just for the fun of it, but somehow they felt too old for that, at fifty-four. An elderly man with rather long grey hair once danced too intimately with Alice and she'd had to ask him to release her. Another time a middle-aged man, not quite sober, kept following them about, trying to buy them Coca-Cola. He was from Birmingham, he told them; he was in London on business and had had lunch with people who were making a cartoon film for his firm. He described the film so that they could look out for it on their television screens: it was an advertisement for wallpaper paste, which

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was what his firm manufactured. They were glad when this man didn't appear the following Tuesday.

OTHER MEN were nicer. There was one who said his name was Sidney, who was lonely because his wife had left him for a younger man; and another who was delicate, a Mr Hawke. There was a silent, bald-headed man whom they both liked dancing with because he was so good at it, and there was Grantly Palmer, who was said to have won awards for dancing in the West Indies.

Grantly Palmer was a Jamaican, a man whom neither of them had agreed to dance with when he'd first asked them because of his colour. He worked as a barman in a club, he told them later, and because of that he rarely had the opportunity to dance at night. He'd often thought of changing his job since dancing meant so much to him, but bar work was all he knew. In the end they became quite friendly with Grantly Palmer, so much so that whenever they entered the dance-rooms he'd hurry up to them smiling, neat as a new pin. He'd dance with one and then the other. Tea had to wait, and when eventually they sat down to it he sat with them, and insisted on paying. He was always attentive, pressing Swiss roll on both of them and getting them cigarettes from the coin machine. He talked about the club where he worked, the Rhumba Rendezvous in Notting Hill Gate, and often tried to persuade them to give it a try. They giggled quite girlishly at that, wondering what their husbands would say about their attending the Rhumba Rendezvous, a West Indian club. Their husbands would have been astonished enough if they knew they went afternoon tea-dancing in the Tottenham Court Dance-Rooms.

Grantly Palmer was a man of forty-two who had never married, who lived alone in a room in Maida Vale. He was a born bachelor, he told the two wives, and would not have appreciated home life, with children and all that it otherwise implied. In his youth he had played the pins, he informed them with an elaborate, white smile, meaning by this that he'd had romantic associations. He would laugh loudly when he said it. He'd been naughty in his time, he said.

Whenever he talked like that, with his eyes blazing excitedly and his teeth flashing, Alice couldn't help thinking that Grantly Palmer was a holy terror just like Poppy had been and still in a way was, the male equivalent. She once said this to Poppy and immediately regretted it, fearing that Poppy would take offence at being likened to a black man, but Poppy hadn't minded at all. Poppy had puffed at a tipped Embassy and had made Alice blush all over her neck by saying that in her opinion Grantly Palmer fancied her. "Skin and bone he'd think me," Poppy said. "Blacks like a girl they can get their teeth into." They were on the upper deck of a bus at the time and Poppy had laughed shrilly into her cigarette smoke, causing people to glance amusedly at her. She peered through her gold-trimmed spectacles at the people who looked at her, smiling at them. "My friend has a fella in love with her," she said to the conductor, shouting after him as he clattered down the stairs. "A holy terror she says he is."

He was cheeky, Alice said, the way he always insisted on walking off the dance-floor hand in hand with you, the way he'd pinch your arm sometimes. But her complaints were half-hearted because the liberties Grantly Palmer took were never offensive: it wasn't at all the same as having a drunk pulling you too close to him and slobbering into your hair. "You'll lose him, Alice," Poppy cried now and again in shrill mock-alarm, as they watched him paying attentions to some woman who was new to the dance-rooms. Once he'd referred to such a person, asking them if they'd noticed her, a stout woman in pink, an unmarried shorthand typist he said she was. "My, my," he said in his Jamaican drawl, shaking his head. "My, my." They never saw the unmarried shorthand typist again, but Poppy said he'd definitely been implying something, that he'd probably enticed her to his room in Maida Vale. "Making you jealous," Poppy said.

The men whom Alice and Poppy had married weren't at all like Grantly Palmer. They were quiet men, rather similar in appearance and certainly similar in outlook. Both were of medium build, getting rather bald in their fifties, Alice's Lenny with a moustache, Poppy's Albert without. They were keen supporters of Crystal Palace

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Football Club, and neither of them, according to Poppy, knew anything about women. The air-raid warden had known about women, Poppy said, and so did Grantly Palmer. "He wants you to go out with him," she said to Alice. "You can see it in his eyes." One afternoon when he was dancing with Alice he asked her if she'd consider having a drink on her own with him, some evening when she wasn't doing anything better. She shook her head when he said that, and he didn't ever bring the subject up again. "He's mad for you," Poppy said when she told her of this invitation. "He's head over heels, love." But Alice laughed, unable to believe that Grantly Palmer could possibly be mad for a corseted grandmother of fifty-four with unmanageable grey hair.

WITHOUT MUCH WARNING, Poppy died. During a summer holiday at Mrs Roope's Prospect Hotel she'd complained of pains, though not complaining much because that was not her way. "First day back you'll see Dr Grace," Albert commanded. Two months later she died one night, without waking up.

After the death Alice was at a loss. For almost fifty years Poppy had been her friend. The affection between them had increased as they'd watched one another age and as their companionship yielded more memories they could share. Their children—Alice's Beryl and Ron, and Poppy's George—had played together. There'd been the business of George's emigration to Canada, and Alice's comforting of Poppy because of it. There'd been the marriage of Ron and then of Beryl, and Poppy's expression of Alice's unspoken thought, that Ron's Hilda wasn't good enough for him, too bossy for any man really, and Poppy's approval of Beryl's Tony, an approval that Alice shared also.

Alice had missed her children when they'd gone, just as Poppy had missed George. "Oh Lord, I know, dear!" Poppy cried when Alice wept the day after Beryl's wedding. Beryl had lived at home until then, as Ron had until his marriage. It was a help, being able to talk to Poppy about it, and Poppy so accurately understanding what Alice felt.

After Poppy's death the silence she'd prevented when Alice's children had grown up and gone fell with a vengeance. Alone in the daytime, it icily surrounded Alice and she found it hard to adapt herself to a life that was greyer and quieter, to days going by without Poppy dropping in or she herself dropping in on Poppy, without the cups of Maxwell House coffee they'd had together, and the cups of tea, and the biscuits and raspberry-jam sandwich cake, which Poppy had been fond of. Once, awake in the middle of the night, she found herself thinking that if Lenny had died she mightn't have missed him so much. She hated that thought and tried, unsuccessfully, to dispel it from her mind. It was because she and Poppy had told one another everything, she kept saying to herself, the way you couldn't really tell Lenny. But all this sounded rather lame, and when she said to herself instead that it was because she and Poppy had known one another all their lives it didn't sound much better: she and Lenny had known one another all their lives, too. For six months after the death she didn't go to Bingo, unable to go on her own. It didn't even occur to her to go afternoon dancing.

The first summer after the death, Alice and Lenny and Albert went as usual to the Prospect Hotel in Southend. There seemed to the two men to be no good reason why they shouldn't, although when they arrived there Albert was suddenly silent and Alice could see that he was more upset than he'd imagined he would be. But after a day he was quite himself again, and when it wasn't necessary to cheer him up any more she began to feel miserable herself. It wasn't so much because of the death, but because she felt superfluous without Poppy. She realised gradually, and the two men realised even more gradually, that on previous holidays there had been no conversation that was general to all four of them: the men had talked to each other and so had their wives. The men did their best now to include Alice, but it was difficult and awkward.

She took to going for walks by herself, along the front and down the piers, out to sea and back again. It was then, that summer at Southend, that Alice began to think about Grantly Palmer. It had never occurred to her before that he didn't even know that Poppy had died, even though they'd all three been such good friends on Tuesday after-

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noons at the Tottenham Court Dance-Rooms. She wondered what he thought, if he'd been puzzled by their sudden absence, or even if he still attended the dance-rooms himself. One night in the Prospect Hotel, listening to the throaty breathing of her husband, she suddenly and quite urgently wanted to tell Grantly Palmer about Poppy's death. She suddenly felt that it was his due, that she'd been unkind not ever to have informed him. Poppy would wish him to know, she said to herself; it was bad that she'd let down her friend in this small way. In the middle of that night, while still listening to Lenny's breathing, she resolved to return to the Tottenham Court Dance-Rooms and found herself wondering if Leo Ritz and his Band would still be playing there.

"Breakfasts've gone down a bit," Albert said on the way back to London, and Lenny reminded him that Mrs Roope had had a bit of family trouble. "Dropped Charlie Cooke, I see," Lenny said, referring to a Crystal Palace player. He handed Albert the *Daily Mirror*, open at the sports page. "Dare say they'll be back to normal next year," Albert said, still referring to the breakfasts.

In Paper Street, a week after their return, she put on her peach-coloured corset and the dress she'd worn the first time they'd gone afternoon dancing—blue-green satin, with a small array of sequins at the shoulders and the breast. It felt more silent than ever in the house in Paper Street, because in the past Poppy used to chat and giggle in just the same way as she had as a girl, lavishly spraying scent on herself, a habit she'd always had also. Alice closed the door of Number 41 behind her, and walked quickly in Paper Street, feeling guiltier than she had when the guilt could be shared. She'd tell some lie if someone she knew said she was looking smart. She'd probably say she was going to Bingo, which was what they'd both said once when Mrs Tedman had looked them up and down as though suspecting the finery beneath. You could see that Mrs Tedman hadn't believed that they were going to Bingo, but Poppy said it didn't matter what Mrs Tedman thought. It was all a bit frightening without Poppy, but then everything was something else without Poppy, dull or silent or frightening. Alice caught a bus, and at a quarter-to-three she entered the dance-rooms.

"Well, well!" Grantly Palmer said, smiling his bright smile. "Well, well, stranger lady!"

"Hullo, Mr Palmer."

"Oh, child, child!"

"Hullo, Grantly."

It had always been a joke, the business of Christian names between the three of them. "Alice and Poppy!" he'd said the first time they'd had tea together. "My, my, what charmin' names!" They'd just begun to use his own Christian name before Poppy had died. "Funny name, Grantly," Poppy had remarked on the bus after he'd first told them, but soon it had become impossible to think of him as anything else.

"Where's Poppy, dear?"

"Poppy died, Grantly."

She told him all about it, about last year's holiday at Southend and the development of the illness and then the funeral. "My God!" he said, staring into her eyes. "My God, Alice."

The band was playing *Lullaby of Broadway*: middle-aged women, in twos or on their own, stood about, sizing up the men who approached them, in the same expert way as she and Poppy had sized men up in their time. "Let's have a cup of tea," Grantly Palmer said.

They had tea and Swiss roll slices and Danish pastries. They talked about Poppy. "Was she happy?" he asked. And Alice said her friend had been happy enough.

In silence on the balcony they watched the dancers rotating below them. He wasn't going to dance with her, she thought, because Poppy had died, because the occasion was a solemn one. She was aware of disappointment. Poppy had been dead for more than a year, after all.

"It's a horrible thing," he said. "A friend dying. In the prime of her life."

"I miss her."

"Of course, Alice."

He reached across the tea table and seized one of her hands. He held it for a moment and then let it go. It was a gesture that reminded her of being a girl. On television men touched girls' hands in that way. How nice, she suddenly thought, the chap called

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Ashley was in *Gone with the Wind.* She'd seen the film with Poppy, revived a few years back, Leslie Howard playing Ashley.

He went away and returned with another pot of tea and a plate of Swiss roll slices. Leo Ritz and his Band were playing *September Love.*

"I thought I'd never lay eyes on you again, Alice."

He regarded her solemnly. He didn't smile when he said that the first time he'd met her he'd considered her a very nice person. He was wearing a suit made of fine, black corduroy. His two grey hands were gripping his tea-cup, nursing it.

"I came back to tell you about Poppy, Grantly."

"I kept on hoping you'd come back. I kept on thinking about you." He nodded, lending emphasis to this statement. Without drinking from it, he placed his tea-cup on the table and pulled his chair in a bit, nearer to hers. She could feel some part of his legs, an ankle bone it felt like. Then she felt one of his hands, beneath the table, touching her right knee and then touching the left one.

SHE DIDN'T move. She gazed ahead of her, feeling through the material of her dress the warmth of his flesh. The first time they'd had tea with him he'd told a joke about three Jamaican clergymen on a desert island and she and Poppy had laughed their heads off. Even when it had become clear to Poppy and herself that what he was after was sex and not love, Poppy had still insisted that she could chance her arm with him. It was as though Poppy wanted her to go out with Grantly Palmer because she herself had gone out with the air-raid warden.

His hand remained on her left knee. She imagined it there, the thin grey hand on the blue satin material of her dress. It moved, pushing back the satin, the palm caressing, the tip of the thumb pressing into her thigh.

She withdrew her leg, smiling to cover the unfriendliness of this decision. She could feel the warmth of a flush all over her neck and on her cheeks and around her eyes. She could feel her eyes beginning to water. On her back and high up on her forehead, beneath the grey frizz of her hair, she felt the moisture of sweat.

He looked away from her. "I always liked you, Alice," he said. "You know? I liked you better than Poppy, even though I liked Poppy too."

It was different, a man putting his hand on your knee: it was different altogether from the natural intimacy of dancing, when anything might have been accidental. She wanted to go away now; she didn't want him to ask her to dance with him. She imagined him with the pink woman, fondling her knees under a table before taking her to Maida Vale. She saw herself in the room in Maida Vale, a room in which there were lilies growing in pots, although she couldn't remember that he'd ever said he had lilies. There was a thing like a bedspread hanging on one of the walls, brightly coloured, red and blue and yellow. There was a gas fire glowing and a standard lamp such as she'd seen in the British Home Stores, and a bed with a similar brightly-coloured cloth covering it, and a table and two upright chairs, and a tattered green screen behind which there'd be a sink and a cooking stove. In the room he came to her and took her coat off and then undid the buttons of her dress. He lifted her petticoat over her head and unhooked her peach-coloured corset and her brassiere.

"Will you dance with me, Alice?"

She shook her head. Her clothes were sticking to her now. Her armpits were clammy.

"Won't you dance, dear?"

She said she'd rather not, not today. Her voice shivered and drily crackled. She'd just come to tell him about Poppy, she said again.

"I'd like to be friends with you, Alice. Now that Poppy has—"

"I have to go home, Grantly. I have to."

"Don't go, darling."

His hands had crossed the table again. They held her wrists; his teeth and his eyes flashed at her, though not in a smiling way. She shouldn't have come, her own voice kept protesting in the depths of her mind, like an echo. It had all been different when there were three of them, all harmless flirtation, with Poppy giggling and pretending, just fun.

There was excitement in his face. He released her wrists, and again, beneath the table, she felt one of his legs against hers.

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He pushed his chair closer to the table, a hand moved on her thigh.

"No, no," she said.

"I looked for you. I don't know your other name, you know. I didn't know Poppy's either. I didn't know where you lived. But I looked for you, Alice."

He didn't say how he'd looked for her, but repeated the phrase, nodding emphatically.

"I thought if I found you we'd maybe have a drink one night. I have records in my room I'd like you to hear, Alice. I'd like to have your opinion."

"I couldn't go to your room—"

"It would be just like sitting here, Alice. It would be quite all right."

"I couldn't ever, Grantly."

What would Beryl and Ron say if they could see her now, if they could hear the conversation she was having, and see his hand on her leg? She remembered them suddenly as children, Beryl on the greedy side yet refusing to eat fish in any shape or form, Ron having his nails painted with Nail-Gro because he bit them. She remembered the birth of Ron and how it had been touch and go because he'd weighed so little. She remembered the time Beryl had scalded herself on the electric kettle and how Lenny had rung 999 because he said it would be the quickest way to get attention. She remembered the first night she'd been married to Lenny, taking her clothes off under a wrap her mother had given her because she'd always been shy about everything. All she had to do, she said to herself, was to stand up and go.

His hands weren't touching her any more. He moved his body away from hers, and she looked at him and saw that the excitement had gone from his face. His eyes had a dead look. His mouth had a melancholy twist to it.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"I fancied you that first day, Alice. I always fancied you, Alice."

HE WAS SPEAKING the truth to her and it was strange to think of it as the truth, even though she had known that in some purely physical way he desired her. It was different from being mad for a person, and yet she felt that his desiring her was just as strange as being mad for her. If he didn't desire her she'd have been able to return to the dance-rooms, they'd have been able to sit here on the balcony, again and again, she telling him more about Poppy and he telling her more about himself, making one another laugh. Yet if he didn't desire her he wouldn't want to be bothered with any of that.

"Can't fancy black girls," he said, with his head turned well away from her. "White women, over sixty if it's possible. Thirteen stone or so. That's why I go to the dance-rooms." He turned to face her and gazed morosely at her eyes. "I'm queer that way," he said. "I'm a nasty kind of black man."

She could feel sickness in her stomach, and the skin of her back, which had been so damp with sweat, was now cold. She picked up her handbag and held it awkwardly for a moment, not knowing what to say. "I must go," she said eventually, and her legs felt shaky when she stood on them.

He remained at the table, all his politeness gone. He looked bitter and angry and truculent. She thought he might insult her. She thought he might shout loudly at her in the dance-rooms, calling her names and abusing her. But he didn't. He didn't say anything at all to her. He sat there in the dim, tinted light, seeming to slump from one degree of disappointment to a deeper one. He looked crude and pathetic. He looked another person.

Again, as she stood there awkwardly, she thought about the room in Maida Vale, which she'd furnished with lilies and brightly-coloured cloths. Again his grey hands undid her corset and her brassiere, and just for a moment it seemed that there wouldn't have been much wrong in letting him admire her in whatever way he wanted to. It was something that would disgust people if they knew, Beryl and Ron would be disgusted, and Lenny and Albert naturally enough. Grantly Palmer would disgust them, and she herself, a grandmother, would disgust them for permitting his attentions. There was something wrong with Grantly Palmer, they'll all say: he was sick and dirty, as he even admitted himself. Yet there were always things wrong with people, things you didn't much care for and even were disgusted by, like Beryl being greedy and Ron biting his nails, like the way Lenny would sometimes blow his nose with-

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out using a handkerchief or a tissue. Even Poppy hadn't been perfect: on a bus it had sometimes been too much, her shrillness and her rushy ways, so clearly distasteful to other people sitting there.

Alice wanted to tell Grantly Palmer all that. Desperately she tried to form an argument in her mind, a conversation with herself that had as its elements the greediness of her daughter and her son's bitten nails and her husband clearing the mucus from his nose at the sink, and she herself agreeing to be the object of perversion. But the elements would not connect, and she felt instinctively that she could not transform them into coherent argument. The elements spun dizzily in her mind, the sense she sought from them did not materialise.

"Good-bye," she said, knowing he would not answer. He was ashamed of himself; he wanted her to go. "Good-bye," she said again. "Good-bye, Grantly."

She moved away from him, forcing herself to think about the house in Paper Street, about entering it and changing her clothes before Lenny returned. She'd bought two chops that morning and there was part of a packet of frozen beans in the fridge. She saw herself peeling potatoes at the sink but at the same time she could feel Grantly Palmer behind her, still sitting at the table, ashamed when he need not be. She felt ashamed herself for having tea with him, for going to see him when she shouldn't, just because Poppy was dead and there was no one else who was fun to be with.

Leo Ritz and his Band were playing *Scatterbrain* as she left the dance-rooms. The middle-aged dancers smiled as they danced, some of them humming the tune.

Choosing People

Accuracy! In all this
(Who can forget his education?)
We must find something to measure:
Genitalia, pulse-rates, sleep,
Cross-sections of the married and the sad.

He says, Stop smiling at each other.
Ah you far-off unborn,
Apprehensive on the breaking twigs of blood,
We apologise: in the last world without computers
Our mental arithmetic shuffles your chromosomes.

Evidence we miss is there though: that with A
I can like B, that with B I love A;
But no tears yet, nor, on the handkerchief,
Blood crusting like rosin, beautiful and solemn,
Airy imperfections in a will to live.

However, we stop smiling; nobody lines up,
Yet I polish and present my half-eaten apple.
And now forever some words squeeze us like clouds—
Not you, not you, no longer envied youth,
Who with your girl this evening
Still lightly choose the path that threads the wood.

Alistair Elliot

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John Passmore

Removing the Rubbish

Reflections on the Ecological Craze

I WOULD NOT WANT to claim that I can solve any of the world's ecological problems. It would be inconsistent with one of my central theses. For ecological problems, or so I believe, can be solved only by the joint efforts of scientists, technologists, economists, statesmen, administrators. And a philosopher is none of these, let alone all of them conjointly. Then what can one do? To compare small things with great, I should seek, like John Locke, "to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing ground a little and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge"—and, by way of knowledge, to effective action. Let me now look more consecutively at what one must try to clear away.

First, mystical "rubbish," the view that mysticism can save us, where technology cannot.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, democracy and free enterprise have always had their enemies; mysticism, primitivism, authoritarianism have always had their adherents. The ecologically-based protest—not only against shortsightedness and greed but, more fundamentally, against those attitudes to nature and society which are used to justify shortsightedness and greed—is, I freely admit, fully justified in itself. But it is being deployed as a new and powerful weapon in the old battle between rationality and mysticism, as when Fraser Darling tries to persuade us that the West can solve its ecological problems only by adopting "the philosophy of wholeness", or "the truth of Zoroastrianism . . . that we are all of one stuff, difference is only in degree, and God can be conceived as being in all and of all, the sublime and divine immanence." (In the currently fashionable manner Darling turns to Zoroaster for what he could easily have found further West.) A moment later we find him urging us to "exercise the ideal of our aristocratic nature, to be the servant of the planet to which we were born and to which we are still bound."[1] His simultaneous appeal to immanence and aristocracy—his simultaneous assertion and denial, that is, of fundamental differences—is only too typical, in its intellectual incoherence, of the Western mystical tradition. And the ideal of the aristocrat who is also a servant—whether of God, of the people, or of the planet—is just as characteristic of authoritarianism.

The "philosophy of wholeness", as in classical German Idealism, serves to link the two. The "total whole" is at once a social and a metaphysical absolute, in which the individual is totally submerged. Fraser Darling is not introducing a new element into Western civilisation; rather, he is trying to make dominant one of the most dangerous illusions to which it has been subject, the mystical, totalistic illusion. Against this attempt, I feel one must particularly protest.

There are, of course, special reasons why ecology should so often have been thought of as being in essence mystical, as anti-scientific, or as entailing "a philosophy of wholeness." The general tendency of Western science has been

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[1] F. Fraser Darling, "Man's responsibility for the environment", in F. J. Ebling (ed.), *Biology and Ethics*, Symposium of the Institute of Biology, no. 18 (London, 1969), p. 119. On this general theme, see also George Seddon, "The rhetoric and ethics of the environmental protest movement", *Meanjin*, 31, 4 (December 1972), pp. 427–37.

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analytic, atomistic. It has explained large-scale behaviour in terms of the behaviour of particles. So classical soil-science analyses a clod of earth into a collection of molecules held together by physical forces. This way of looking at such a clod is of great importance in explaining, let us say, the behaviour of an area of land under the impact of heavy rain or of deep ploughing. The ecologist thinks of the land not as a set of clods but rather as an ingredient in an energy system, a larger whole.

> Land [writes Aldo Leopold] is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals. Food chains are the living channels which conduct energy upward; death and decay return it to the soil.[2]

Changes in the soil's fertility he explains by pointing to break-downs in such chains, such cycles. Similarly, whereas the atomistic biologist studies an organism as a system of cells—and, beyond that, of molecules—the ecologist looks at its place in a broader system, its habitat, and at the relationship between that organism-in-its-habitat and still wider systems.

That does not mean, however, that the ecologist can eschew laboratory studies. If he hopes to understand, let us say, the way in which mercuric salts are built up in the human organism, he needs to investigate *both* the nature of the food chain which enables mercuric salts deposited in an estuary to find their way into the brains of human beings *and* what happens in the tissues of each of the members of that food chain. Nor does the mere fact that the ecologist makes use of such concepts as energy cycles or food chains in any way suggest that ecology is supra-scientific.

This is a crucial point. Science is not *intrinsically* atomistic. It explains the behaviour of the tides, for example, by referring them to forces operating in the solar system. Sometimes, in order to explain a thing's behaviour, one needs only to look at the forms of activity which go on within it—or, as it would more commonly be put, at the particles which make it up. Sometimes one needs to look, rather, at the wider forms of activity within which its own forms of activity go on. But, more often than not, one needs to look at both—explaining a person's behaviour, for example, partly in terms of his "genetic constitution", the forms of activity he has inherited, partly in terms of the culture within which he was educated. He stammers, let us say, because he was born left-handed into a culture which demands right-handedness from its members.

No doubt, the ecologist's talk of chains and cycles may ring ancient bells by associative resonance. We think, perhaps, of the classical "great chain of being" or of those cycles beloved by mystics—"a perpetual circle for the Good, from the Good, in the Good, and to the Good."[3] But such associations are not justified by the actual procedures of ecologists. The "wholes" in which ecology is interested are not mystical unities—my back garden could constitute an ecosystem—nor are they (although Fraser Darling suggests otherwise) the kind of meta-physical whole within which all differences are converted into differences in degree. Indeed, although ecology can be studied at a high level of abstraction in terms of energy transfers, one of its main contributions to human understanding lies in its emphasis on the importance of individual differences, the far-reaching consequences which can result from what at first sight appears to be a very slight change in the membership of a system. Only in so far as it has wrongly been supposed that science must be atomistic does the Western scientific tradition have any quarrel with the rise of ecology.

This is not the sort of quarrel which can be resolved only by abandoning science in favour of mysticism.

Sacred Nature?

NOR, TO SOLVE OUR ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS, are we forced once more to think of nature as sacred. That doctrine, too, "lies in the way to knowledge." So to revert, I suggest, is to go back on the whole tradition of Western science, perhaps the greatest of man's achievements. For to regard nature as sacred is to think of it in the manner the Jews and the Greeks deliberately rejected, as having a "mysterious life" which it is improper, sacrilegious, to try to understand or control, a life we should submit to and worship.[4] Science, in contrast, converts mysteries into problems, to which it can hope to find solutions.

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[2] Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 253.

[3] C. E. Rolt (ed.), *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology* (London, 1920), p. 107. Compare the diagram from the 14th century mystic Henry Suso in A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (tr. Watson, 1953), facing p. 616, with the diagram in "Ecology: the new great chain of being", *Natural History*, 77, 10 (December 1968), p. 9.

[4] On this theme, see Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 342, 344.

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Such a reversion, furthermore, is neither necessary nor sufficient to save the biosphere. It is certainly not sufficient. Societies for whom nature is sacred have nonetheless destroyed their natural habitation. A passage from Plato's *Critias* will illustrate this point. He is describing Attica:

> There are remaining only the bones of the wasted body, as they may be called . . . all the richer and softer parts of the soil having fallen away, and the mere skeleton of the land being left. But in the primitive state of the country, its mountains were high hills covered with soil, and the plains . . . were full of rich earth, and there was abundance of wood in the mountains.[5]

This decline, Plato tells us, is testified to by the fact that "sacred memorials" remain at points, by his time dry, where once flowed rivers and streams. Man does not necessarily preserve, that is, the stream he has dedicated to a god. Simple ignorance or greed can be as damaging as technological know-how. Nowhere, as we can see, is ecological destruction more apparent than in today's Japan, for all its tradition of nature-worship.

Indeed, to carry this argument further, the belief that nature is sacred can tell against attempts to preserve it. Just in virtue of its divinity, it may be argued, nature can be trusted to look after itself. Consider the case of Emerson. "In the woods," he tells us, "we return to reason and faith."

> "There [he continues] I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity . . . which nature cannot repair; . . . the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God."[6]

Yet Emerson was indulgent towards the plunderers of the American countryside then making their way to the American West. "The recuperative powers of Nature" were, in his eyes, a sufficient guarantee that the self-reliance he admired would not issue in final devastation.[7] A nature which can heal men can surely heal itself, a nature that is divine men cannot destroy. To take our ecological crises seriously is to recognise, first, man's utter dependence on nature, but secondly, nature's vulnerability to human depredations: the *fragility*, that is, of both man and nature, for all their notable powers of recuperation. And this means that neither man nor nature is sacred or quasi-divine.[8]

THERE IS MORE THAN a little paradox in the view, when it comes from ecologically-minded preservationists, that we need to revert to older, mystical attitudes to nature. For ecology, however much some of those who praise ecology would like to persuade us otherwise, is a serious scientific attempt, dependent on the aid of such technological innovations as the computer, to understand what scientists still find mysterious—the ways in which populations respond to environmental fluctuations. This manner of looking at ecology is unpopular with those, like Theodore Roszak, who hoped that ecology would replace scientific analysis by

> a new science in which the object of knowledge will be rather like the poet's beloved: something to be contemplated but not analysed, something that is permitted to retain its mysteries.[9]

But if Roszak and his counter-cultural followers are disappointed to discover that ecology is after all another branch of science, that it *dispels* mysteries, many of us see in that fact, rather, a demonstration that Western science is still fecund, still capable of contributing to the solution of the problems which beset human beings, even when they are problems of the scientist's own making.

THAT SCIENCE IS STILL SO FECUND is just as well, seeing that ignorance is one of the most potent obstacles to our solving our ecological problems, an ignorance which only science can dispel. No doubt, the modern West has more knowledge at its disposal than has had any previous society. But it has neither the kind nor the degree of knowledge which it now needs. Our knowledge of the ways in which societies work is not at all comparable in extent with our knowledge of the

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[5] Plato's *Critias*, (tr. B. Jowett, 1892), 111*b*, *c*.

[6] R. W. Emerson, *Nature: Addresses and Lectures* (Boston, 1876), p. 10.

[7] Compare S. L. Udall, *The Quiet Crisis* (1963), pp. 48–55.

[8] It may be true that in hunting societies—the example most often cited—the belief that nature is sacred and animals are capable of understanding served in some measure as a protection against the destruction of species. (Although man the hunter, it would now seem, was largely responsible for the disappearance of a great many of the large animals—the giant kangaroo in Australia, the moa in New Zealand, the woolly mammoth in North America.) But as matters stand, such beliefs are not merely so out of harmony with our traditions that to attempt to revive them would be to attempt the impossible. They simply would not serve.

[9] Theodore Roszak, "Ecology and mysticism", *Humanist* 86: 5 (May 1971), p. 136. See also Norman Brown, *Life Against Death* (1959), pt. 5, ch. 15, p. 236, and my summary in *The Perfectibility of Man*, pp. 306. See also Passmore, "The revolt against science", *Search* 3, 11–12 (November–December 1972), pp. 415–22.

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workings, let us say, of the planetary system. We know little about the atmosphere, the seas, the life cycles of the scarcely numerable varieties of plant and animal life. While absolutely speaking we know a great deal, we are proportionally ignorant, proportionally in relation to what we need to know. The farmer tilling his fields by conventional methods and living in a traditional society did not need to know a great deal. But the task we have now to undertake, in attempting to estimate the long-term effects of our actions both on the biosphere and on human societies, is so immense that in relation to it our ignorance is almost total.

To correct this situation may well require, I am fully prepared to admit, a minor revolution within science. The scientist will be forced, in the unenthusiastic words of one of my scientific colleagues, "to slosh about in that primordial ooze known as inter-disciplinary studies." He will need to pay more respect to such scientists as work outside laboratories. There is a pecking-order in science; almost everybody pecks the "natural historian." The field naturalist is unlikely to find himself awarded a Nobel Prize or even a Fellowship of the Royal Society. But there are already signs that such a revolution is under way, if still very tentatively.[10] Field studies are beginning to regain something of their previous status—Darwin did not, after all, work in a laboratory—and more and more distinguished scientists are at least dipping their fingers into the "primordial ooze." To say that science has need of new directions, however, is one thing; to say that the West ought to abandon its hard-won tradition of critical investigation is quite another. That tradition it needs more than ever before.

Man the Master?

WHAT ABOUT THE VIEW, so often associated with science and technology, that man is master of the world? Must not that at least, if not science itself, be abandoned?

Man's dominion can be understood in a number of different ways, varying in their degree of "arrogance." On the minimal interpretation, it "licenses" men to sustain themselves by making use, in the manner of any other animal, of what they find around them. Or, to drop the confusing quasi-legal talk of "licences", "dominion", "rights", talk of which we have had more than enough, it says that there is nothing morally wrong in men behaving in this way. Even thus interpreted it is rejected by the sterner ascetics, by, for example, the third-century neo-Platonist Porphyry, who would restrict the diet of such men as hope to perfect themselves to those fruits which plants do not need for reproduction.[11] (This is at least an improvement on the sole bill of fare permitted, on similar grounds, by Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* prophets—rotting fruit and decaying cabbage leaves.) But wherever the boundaries are drawn, we can certainly say this much: man can live at all only as a predator, whether on plants or animals. And in order to establish a civilisation he has to go beyond this point. He has to domesticate herds or plant crops and must so far act as lord and master over at least a segment of nature. In so far as he necessarily acts in this way, it is pointless to suggest that man should do *nothing* to disturb existing ecological systems, should *in no sense* attempt to master them.

At the opposite extreme, "lordship over nature" is interpreted as entailing that nature is wax in man's hands. Interpreted thus, I agree, it must certainly be rejected. Indeed, it was never plausible. Cicero's Balbus, boasting that as a result of their navigational inventions men had now mastered the wind and the waves, had never experienced, so much is clear, the force of a tropical cyclone. Even now, in claiming mastery over nature, men are whistling to keep their courage up. If their science, once converted into technology, enables them to control their immediate natural environment more effectively than can any other animal, it also constantly reminds them (as Karl Popper has particularly emphasised) of what they cannot do. As ecology has now sufficiently demonstrated, the doctrine that nature is infinitely malleable is not merely an illusion—comforting, perhaps, to human beings in their helplessness and encouraging to them in their aspirations—but a dangerous delusion.

AN INTERMEDIATE INTERPRETATION, however, can be framed thus: men, uniquely, are capable of

[10] One of the most significant examples that has come my way is A. B. Pippard's Inaugural Lecture as Cavendish Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge. It is time, he there suggests, for scientists to turn their attention "towards the difficult and less elegant phenomena of the real physical world" in contrast with their past concentration on simpler and more elegant natural laws. Coming from a Cavendish Professor, that is really something. See A. B. Pippard, *Reconciling Physics with Reality* (Cambridge, 1972).

[11] Porphyry, *De Abstinentia, vi*, 20.

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transforming the world into a civilised state; that is their major responsibility to their fellow-men.

The virtues of civilisation, no doubt, are now sometimes questioned. Once more the "noble savage" hunts his ecological way through intellectual drawing-rooms. Hsün Tzu's advice to his Chinese contemporaries:

> You glorify nature and meditate on her:
> Why not domesticate her and regulate her?
> You depend on things and marvel at them:
> Why not unfold your own ability and transform them?

finds itself reversed, as advice to the West:

> You have domesticated nature and regulated her:
> Why not glorify her and meditate on her?
> You have unfolded your own ability and transformed things:
> Why not depend on them and marvel at them?

This would, indeed, be the "great refusal", the rejection of all that man has discovered he can achieve. No doubt the West needs more fully to realise that it "depends on things" and so far to "meditate on" and even to "glorify" nature. But it cannot now turn back, so my argument runs, even if it were desirable that it should do so. Only by transforming nature can it continue to survive. There is no good ground, either, for objecting to transformation as such; it can make the world more fruitful, more diversified, and more beautiful.

Living Dangerously

IF WE ASK, indeed, what human beings add to the world by their presence in it, there is, I should say, only one possible reply: civilisation. Were it not for his ability to civilise, man would be no more than a predator among the rest, more powerful, more aggressive, more violent, more skilful in capturing his prey but in no other respects superior, and in many respects inferior, to the prey he hunts. And man's great memorials —his science, his philosophy, his technology, his architecture, his countryside—are all of them founded upon his attempt to understand and subdue nature. Through their struggles with nature men have discovered their potentialities and developed those forms of enterprise which constitute their civilisation.

I have included the countryside in the list of man's memorials, because even the landscapes we now so greatly admire—the landscapes of Tuscany or of England or of Kyushu—are largely the creation of human enterprise, of human struggles. When Cowper wrote "God made the country; man made the town", he was simply mistaken. The 18th-century English countryside Cowper knew and loved was largely of human creation. (What god, for that matter, would not be proud of having created 18th-century Bath?) That is what, however obscurely, Hegel and his followers saw, and passed on to the Marxists. It is not merely out of arrogance that men think of themselves as having a "duty to subdue nature"; it is only they who can create. So far, and only so far, they can rightfully claim "dominion over nature."

Nor, however implausible the doctrine that nature exists only to serve man, is there any objection to the weaker view (to which Descartes subscribes) that whatever exists in nature is of some use to us. This is not, as it might at first seem to be, an empirical hypothesis, for there is no way of falsifying it. It always remains possible that something will turn out to be useful which we have cast aside as useless. But it can act as a guiding principle, encouraging men to look for uses in unexpected places, discouraging the destruction of what might eventually turn out to be of vital importance to them. In that form, it should certainly not be cast aside as "rubbish."

THE DANGER IN DESTROYING is, of course, a point on which the ecological critics have particularly insisted. And quite clearly one has to concede, as Ehrlich puts it, that "any tinkering with an ecosystem may result in unforeseen and deleterious consequences."[12]

But man has had no option but to live dangerously. If he had let himself be too alarmed by the fact that, in a certain sense, he does not know what he is doing, he would never have ventured beyond his immediate environment. Nor would he, certainly, ever have embarked on the domestication of animals, let alone agriculture or industry. Indeed, if we follow to its logical conclusion Ehrlich's description of man as a dangerous tinkerer, we can scarcely stop short of that picture of man's relationships with nature at the very end of the 19th century by W. S. Blunt, the ecologist's poet-laureate.[13] Here is "unspoiled Nature" as Blunt sees it:

[12] P. R. and A. H. Ehrlich, *Population Resources Environment*, p. 182.

[13] This poem, Blunt tell us, was "written to some extent in collaboration with the late Herbert Spencer." It sounds like it.

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Thou dost remember, Lord, the glorious
World it was,
The beauty, the abundance, the unbroken face
Of undulant forest spread without or rent or seam,
Thy lakes, Thy floods, Thy marshes, tameless,
unbetrayed,

All virgin of the spoiler, all inviolate,
In beauty undeflowered, where fear was not nor hate.

And here is man, that "lewd bare-buttocked ape":

Man the senseless knave
Who struck fire from his flint to burn
Thy gorses brave,
Thy heaths for his lean kine, who, being
the one unclean,
Defiled Thy flower-sweet Earth with ordure
heaps obscene,
To plant his rice, his rye.[14]

But the virtues of civilisation, many of us would wish to argue, are not to be so lightly set aside. It is one thing to recognise that human action has unintended consequences; quite another to suggest that man is nothing but the defiler of nature. Lewd he often is, no doubt, but the bareness of his buttocks is not the only thing which distinguishes him from the ape. If the "glorious world" of Blunt's imagination was a world without hate—although scarcely, as he suggests, without fear—it was also a world without love, without art, without science, without philosophy, with no Venice, no Nara, no Salzburg.[15] These are as much consequences of his "tinkering" as are "ordure heaps obscene." That we ought to attempt to try to preserve the spirit that creates them, I shall not even bother to argue.

[14] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, "Satan Absolved: a Victorian mystery" (1899), in *The Poetical Works of W. S. Blunt* (1914), vol. 2, pp. 266, 275.

[15] Ian McHarg, in a much-reprinted paper rhetorically entitled "Is man a planetary disease?", is prepared to lay it down that "Algae know about creativity but man does not." There is no depth of masochistic nonsense to which in their moods of self-denigration men will not descend.

In Roeg's 1970 film *Walk-about* not man in general but only civilised man is diagnosed as a disease. The gentle self-reliant aborigine is contrasted with civilised men and women who are cruel, cold, mean-spirited, sexually repressed, devoted only to their possessions, utterly ruthless. Western art is depicted as childish play, its science as trivialities in a desert, its literature as a rambling story at once pointless and cruel, its education system as a training in futile snobberies, its industry as rusted debris, its technology as an instrument of slaughter, its mathematics as empty formulae.

If this indictment—or the picture of civilisation in Godard's *Weekend*—is at all points justified then, certainly, I should have no policy to advocate except mass suicide. The alternative—the hunting savage—arouses in my heart no enthusiasm whatsoever.

Liberal Cant?

IT IS A MUCH MORE particular assumption, however, that the democratic institutions, the spirit of enterprise, the liberal attitude characteristic of the modern West are worth preserving and maintaining. That requires separate argument.

No one with any knowledge of history could have any illusions about Western civilisation, modern or ancient, with its record of violence, cruelty, fanaticism, puritanism and avarice. What is particularly tragic is the way in which the best and the worst have so often gone together as the history of Florence from the 13th to the 15th century vividly exemplifies. Everything was there, genius in literature, painting, sculpture, science; cruelty and violence of the lowest, least forgivable, kind; even the egalitarian terrorism of Giano della Bella. But it remains true, I believe, that outside Western civilisation men have nowhere so often risen to such great heights. This by no means implies, I should freely grant, that cultures which are not Western in type are valueless. No one who has even the slightest acquaintance with their cultural achievements or their social structures could possibly take that view. In its dealings with other cultures, the West has often shown itself at its arrogant, bigoted, greedy worst. But neither the simple sensualities of Tahiti nor the complex ritual of ancient Japan enabled the human spirit to expand to its fullest extent. A craftsman, a certain type of artist, might have found in such a society all that he needed; but a philosopher, a scientist, a dramatist, would not. The West has not conquered the world solely by the force of its arms or the flashier attractions of its consumer goods. Even a country like Japan has found the richness and diversity of Western culture profoundly stimulating, for all the importance of its own achievements.

ONE OF THE MORE FASHIONABLE forms of contemporary cant condemns as "racialist"—now an all-encompassing form of abuse—the description of any form of society as "higher" or "more advanced" or "better" than any other.

No doubt, as I grant, a less "advanced" society can possess virtues which a more "advanced" society lacks. The fact remains that there are familiar and quite proper ways of grading societies: in terms of the diversity of their culture, their humanitarianism, the degree of liberty they offer their citizens. By any of these

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criteria the liberal democratic West stands high. (Nor will it do to reply that this is not surprising, since the West invented these criteria. What other criteria are we offered?) Its range of cultural achievements in science, in philosophy, in art, is unequalled; few of its citizens starve in the streets or live by exhibiting their deformities; never before has personal liberty been so widely diffused.

If we judge modern Western democracies imperfect this is only by applying to them those absolute standards which the West has taught us. We take it for granted that they contain no Untouchables, no Etas. We condemn them, quite rightly, because they still discriminate against certain of their members, still confine personal liberty by absurd and pointless laws, still do not adequately educate their citizens, still do not do all that they might to help those—inside or outside their territories—whose life is nasty, brutish and short. If the liberal democracies collapse, this will be because they have aroused in their citizens aspirations which no society will ever completely satisfy, not because those aspirations are worthless.[16] To *seek* their destruction, with whatever noble aims in mind, is to attempt to destroy the only sort of society which has ever come near to fulfilling those aspirations.

THE VIEW THAT ecological problems are more likely to be solved in an authoritarian than in any such liberal democratic society rests on the implausible assumption that the authoritarian state would be ruled by ecologist-kings. In practice, there is more hope of action in democratic societies. In the United States, particularly, the habit of local action, the capacity of individuals to initiate legal proceedings, the tradition of public disclosure are powerful weapons in the fight against ecological destruction. The democratic states should rather be condemned, I suggest, when they are tempted into exactly the same vices as the totalitarian states: spying, soothing utterances from central authorities, face-saving, bureaucratic inertia, censorship, concealment.[17]

Who Knows Best?

WHAT ABOUT THE METAPHYSICAL outlook characteristic of the West? That is exceptionally complex and diversified, by no means to be summed up as the view that nature is wax in man's hands.

Nor is the West, I should add, irrevocably committed to that Aristotelian-type metaphysics for which nature consists of substances with distinct properties, each of which can be separately modified without altering anything else. One of the most important alternative suggestions, dating back in essence to Heraclitus, is that the world consists of complex systems of interacting processes varying in their stability. Each such system—of which a human being is one—can survive, like a flame, only so long as it can interact with surrounding systems in certain particular ways, drawing upon and giving out to the systems around it. It can die by choking on its own wastes or because it has exhausted its resources. That way of looking at the world, which ecological investigations help to substantiate, makes it perfectly plain why "You can't do one thing at a time." It destroys, too, the belief that human beings are somehow different, outside the ecosystem, whether as villainous intruders or heroic manipulators. But it does so in a manner not in the least mystical, not in the least anti-scientific in spirit, not in the least implying that there is something intrinsically wrong with any attempt to make the world a better place.

On such a view man's uniqueness is not metaphysical. It lies, like the peculiarities of a flame, in the special character of his relations with other systems, his ability deliberately to transform them. Christians have thought other-

[16] It is very misleading, of course, to speak of the "West" in a monolithic way. I have often been told, if I wrote in modified praise of Western civilisation, that I had forgotten Newark and New York. The tragedy of New York no one could forget; that city and its inhabitants should be preserved for eternity in plasticised aspic as a memorial to the grandeur and the misery of the human condition. Newark, I confess, but seldom crosses my mind, less often than, let us say, Aarhus. Why should it? But Newark is no more typical of the West than is Calcutta of India or Osaka of Japan. I see no reason for believing, either, that it shows the West, as in a science-fiction mirror, what it is certain to become. Indeed, it is reminiscent of the 18th century rather than prophetic of the twenty-first. In many fundamental respects, America is a very old-fashioned country.

[17] In so far as the ecological movement necessarily involves a critique of the creeping bureaucratisation so characteristic of our society, it has a social and political importance extending well beyond its immediate ecological ends. In so far as its practical policies would tend to encourage that bureaucratisation, it represents a social danger. For not only are man and nature fragile, so too is liberal civilisation, as the tragic history of inter-War Germany so vividly reminds us.

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wise. Ecological critics of the West are justified in arguing that Christianity has encouraged man to think of himself as metaphysically unique, as supernaturally above (rather than naturally immersed in) the ebb and flow of processes. What is ecologically dangerous in Christianity, indeed, is not that it denies the sacredness of nature but that it encourages men to believe that they are "sons of God" and therefore secure, their continued existence on earth guaranteed by God. So far it encourages *hubris*. It makes of nature something which could be ravaged with impunity. Man, it must certainly be recognised, has no tenure in the biosphere.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, however, has in the past proved itself to be remarkably flexible. Theologians are now busily attempting to work out new attitudes to nature, still consonant in a general way with traditional Christianity but reverting in important respects to a prelapsarian conception of man and man's role and denying that men have a "sacredness" which animals do not possess.[18] For my part I more than doubt whether Christian theology can thus reshape itself without ceasing to be distinctively Christian, whether it can bring itself to deny, in the light of its central theology, either that man is *metaphysically* unique—as a soul to be saved—or that in the end his survival is *metaphysically* guaranteed.[19] Only if men see themselves, I should rather argue, for what they are, quite alone, with no one to help them except their fellow-men, products of natural processes which are wholly indifferent to their survival, will they face their ecological problems in their full implications. Not by the extension, but by the total rejection, of the concept of the sacred will they move towards that sombre realisation.

The rejection of Christianity by no means immediately entails, however, the acceptance of a doctrine more conscious of human limitations, as is sufficiently obvious both in the Soviet Union and contemporary China. Nothing could be more ecologically damaging than the Hegelian-Marxist doctrine that nature, before man operates upon it, is mere potentiality. Two traditional attitudes are, I suggest, more promising—the first, that man should think of himself as a steward; the second, that in his attempts to transform nature he should cooperate with it. The "stewardship" attitude is often said to be peculiarly Christian; this I would deny. It is linked rather with the idea that man forms part of a chain of improvement, that he has responsibilities to those who come after him, responsibilities arising out of his attempt to preserve and develop what he loves. In its fullest implications this is a peculiarly Western and modern concept, dating back to Kant. Its ecological importance is manifest.

As for the view that man should cooperate with nature, this cannot, of course, be taken literally. Nature is not a semi-divine entity with aims which human beings can share. Against any such interpretation, Robert Boyle rightly protested. Interpreted less literally, however, it suggests a policy of ecological wisdom: to try to control pests by diversifying crops rather than by insecticides, to construct tourist hotels so that they make use of, rather than cut across, existing drainage contours, to grow what can be grown with least damage to the countryside. And so on, modestly but effectively. Read thus, it is by no means rubbish.

TO ACCEPT IT DOES NOT commit us, however, to Barry Commoner's "third law of ecology" —"nature knows best."[20]

It is true enough—as, like Ehrlich, Commoner argues—that every human intervention in an ecosystem is likely to disturb the workings of that system in a way that is detrimental to some member of it. So much is true of every change, man-induced or nature-induced. But it by no means follows, as his "law" might seem to suggest, that every such change, or even most such changes, will be detrimental to *human beings*. Unlike the watches to which he compares them, ecological systems were not designed for man's use. When men picked seeds off plants and sowed them on cleared ground, they acted in a way that was detrimental to the organic life which was accustomed to feed on the fallen seeds. But only

[18] See, for example, J. B. Cobb, *Is It Too Late? A Theology of Ecology* (Beverly Hills, 1972).

[19] Much stress is now laid, however, on Paul's "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (*Rom. vii*: 22). This is taken to imply that not only man but the whole creation anticipates salvation.

There have for long been those, indeed, who expect immortality for animals, although no one in the West perhaps, has gone so far as those Eastern teachers for whom even a blade of grass can aspire to Buddhahood. Christianity would be wholly transformed, however, were it to be supposed that cats and dogs were as much "sons of God" as are human beings and are called upon in the same way to seek after salvation.

[20] Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle* (1972) p. 41.

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the most unreconstructed primitivist would suggest that the actions of our agricultural forefathers were destructive of human interests. A nature left entirely alone as "knowing best" would support only the dreariest and most monotonous of lives. Even the primitive hunter found it necessary to burn; the fires he lit have transformed the face of the earth.[21]

It is, indeed, absurd to suggest that man can find in nature, at hand for his taking, all that he needs to live a good life. So much, in principle, the authors of Genesis saw: nature has its "thorns and thistles" which man has no option but to root out.

In his essay on "Nature", J. S. Mill mounts a general attack on the injunction that men ought to "cooperate with nature."

> Her powers [as Mill puts it] are often towards man in the position of enemies, from whom he must wrest, by force and ingenuity, what little he can for his own use.[22]

One may well warm to the enthusiasm with which Mill attacks the more sentimental nature-lovers. Anyone who lives on the inhospitable shores of Australia will certainly appreciate his feelings. To think of nature as an "enemy", however, is not the alternative to thinking of it as a "friend." Natural processes, and this must be constantly emphasised, go on in their own way indifferent to human interests. But we shall do best to learn how they operate, not supposing that they will immediately respond to our whims or miraculously suspend their modes of operation so as to permit us harmlessly to convert rain-forests into agricultural lands or rivers into sewers.

A New Morality?

WHAT OF THE VIEW that the West now needs not only a new concept of nature but a new set of moral principles to act as a guide in its relationships with nature? That, I think, is not entirely wrong-headed. During most of the West's history, its moral philosophers, Stoic or Christian, denied that man's relationship with nature is governed by any moral considerations whatsoever. From Montaigne onwards, however, to say nothing of his neo-Platonic predecessors, sceptics and humanists took a different view. And by the end of the 18th century even Christians began to argue, although often against fierce opposition from their co-religionists, that callousness towards animal suffering was morally wrong.

Nor was cruelty to animals a unique instance of such a change of heart. Well over a hundred years ago an editorial writer in the Melbourne *Age*—and newspaper editorials are not given to moral innovations—could assert that "he who cuts down a tree unnecessarily is a criminal." One has only to look at some regions of England, or France, or Italy, to see that, as much as in Japan, the land, for all the hardship involved in working it, has been loved. As Leopold recognised, there are "seeds" in the West of the morality he advocates in which the active cherishing of nature is accounted good and its wanton destruction evil, even if it would be unsafe to assume (with Victor Hugo) that such a new morality will *inevitably* come to dominate the West.

The traditional moral teaching of the West, Christian or utilitarian, has always taught men, however, that they ought not so to act as to injure their neighbours. And we have now discovered that the disposal of wastes into sea or air, the destruction of ecosystems, the procreation of large families, the depletion of resources constitute injury to our fellow-men, present and future. To that extent, conventional morality, without any supplementation whatsoever, suffices to justify our ecological concern, our demand for action against the polluter, the depleter of natural resources, the destroyer of species and wildernesses.

ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES, an ardent preservationist, condemns me as a "human chauvinist." What he means is that in my ethical arguments, I treat human interests as paramount. I do not apologise for that. An "ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the plants and animals growing on it" would not only be about the behaviour of human beings, as is sufficiently obvious, but would have to be justified by reference to human interests. The land which a bad farmer allows to slip into a river did not have a "right" to stay where it was. The supposition that anything but a human being has "rights" is, or so I have suggested, quite untenable.

This insistence on the primacy of human interest does not imply, however, that the only question at issue is whether someone's *income* will

[21] O. C. Stewart: "Fire as the first great force employed by man", in W. L. Thomas, Jr. (ed.), *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (1956), pp. 115–33.

[22] J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 15.

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decline as a result of the silting of the river. The silting of a sparkling river, the replacement of a forested slope by an eroded hillside, is a loss to mankind even if it does not lessen anyone's income. To cause it to happen constitutes an act of vandalism, the destruction of something worth enjoying for its own sake. Only in so far as Western moralists have suggested otherwise, have suggested that no form of human activity has any value unless it involves a direct relationship with God or (for moralists of a more secular cast of mind) a relationship to a narrowly conceived economic prosperity, can the West plausibly be said to need a "new ethic." What it needs, for the most part, is not so much a "new ethic" as a more general adherence to a perfectly familiar ethic.

Towards a New Sensuousness

FOR THE MAJOR SOURCES of our ecological disasters—apart from ignorance—are greed and short-sightedness, which amount to much the same thing. The greedy man pursues the object of his greed in a manner which is indifferent to the means employed and to the wider consequences of his pursuit. The short-sighted man, more commonly described as "practical", displays that special form of indifference to consequences which refuses to look beyond the present or the immediate future. There is no novelty in the view that greed is evil and no need of a new ethic to tell us as much.

Our society, however, has officially denounced greed while in practice subscribing to Horace's maxim: "By right means if you can, but by any means make money." (Just as it officially denounces violence while in fact admiring it, glorying in it—as its favourite forms of literature make perfectly clear—except when it is employed by those it condemns on other grounds.)

To tell men that they must now moderate their zeal for possessions, must give up what have been highly profitable pursuits, must surrender established economic rights, is to risk condemnation as a fanatic. No doubt it is formally recognised that there are ways of making money that are not entirely virtuous. But even the successful thief often excites admiration rather than contumely. The most devastating of land-developers may hope to be rewarded, in British provinces, with such signs of public esteem as a knighthood. As the young Marx once wrote, "money is the Jealous God of Israel before whom no other god may exist"—and the worship of it, as he also argued, has given birth to an "actual contempt for and practical degradation of nature."[23] It is not "rubbish" to suggest that our society actually, although not in its explicitly-enunciated moral principles, does honour to violence, short-sightedness and greed. What this brings out, once more, is that new modes of behaviour are much more important than new moral principles.

I AM NOT, when I condemn greed, condemning the making of money—that would be like a eunuch condemning sexual intercourse. All I am condemning is the view that every pursuit is valuable just in so far as it is a way of making money, or that money-making is the rational norm in comparison with which all other pursuits are irrational and abnormal. Every free society has been a commercial society, and the connection is not a merely accidental one. But certainly there is little hope for us unless we can moderate our desire to possess.[24] We shall do so, however, only if we can learn to be more sensuous in our attitude to the world, more ready to enjoy the present moment for itself, as an object of immediate pleasure, instead of frenetically seeking the power and security that possessions offer.

IT IS AT THIS POINT that the moral outlook of the West is not merely inadequate but dangerous—in virtue of the puritanism it inherited from Augustine, and beyond Augustine, from Plato. It is well known how, for example, this puritanism adversely affects the prospects for population control, by restricting the publicising of birth control methods and by condemning all sexual relationships which do not have procreation as their aim. But the more general puritan attack on sensuousness, its denial that the enjoyment of sensual pleasures for their own sake can ever be right and proper, has also had more general, less obvious, ecological consequences.

Admittedly, one has only to look back on the art, the architecture, the literature, the man-made landscapes, the townscapes, of our Western past to observe that the puritanic tradition has never

[23] Karl Marx: "On the Jewish question," in Easton and Guddat, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (1967), pp. 245–6.

[24] The "we" in this sentence is not that patronising "we" which means "everybody except me and the enlightened few I am addressing." It means all of us: "You! *hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable—mon frère.*"

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wholly destroyed, even in the West, man's sensuous delight in the surfaces of things, in sights and smells, in sounds and tastes and touches. But it is as if the smoke of the Industrial Revolution has destroyed men's eyes, ears, noses and sense of touch, or as if only by seizing upon and making their own the familiar tenets of what had been a minority puritanism could men justify the ugliness which they were creating around them. A more sensuous society could never have endured the desolate towns, the dreary and dirty houses, the uniquely ugly chapels, the slag heaps, the filthy rivers, the junk yards which constitute the "scenery" of the post-industrial West and which it has exported to the East.

Only if men can first learn to look sensuously at the world will they learn to care for it. Not only to look at it, but to touch it, smell it, taste it. Plato—like every other authoritarian; like Stalin and Skinner in our own century; like the Protestant Church (legate in its own eyes of an authoritarian deity)—severely condemns the sensuous man, the lover of sights and sounds. And one must grant to him that a purely sensuous life, in which sensuousness is never kindled into love, love with the responsibility and care it brings in its train, is impoverished, sub-human and incapable by itself of solving ecological, or any other, problems. But, on the other side, the attempt to be "super-human" by rising totally above sensuousness issues in a way of life no less impoverished, no less sub-human, and is utterly destructive, into the bargain, of man-nature relationships.[25]

The End of Growth?

THE TRADITIONS I HAVE SO FAR EXPLORED, whether with sympathy or antipathy, have a long history. I have said almost nothing so far about a factor which many would regard as far more ecologically significant than metaphysical principles and moral ideas—industrial growth. I cannot conclude without considering, however inadequately, the problems it raises.

Industrial growth is a new phenomenon and the attitudes of mind it has generated, however powerfully, are still so new that it is somewhat odd to call them traditions. It is only very recently that nations have boasted of their Gross National Product, that a society has condemned itself, or been condemned, because its *per capita* growth rate is low, that consumers have come to expect an endless flow of new types of product, that industry has been geared to meet the needs of an affluent society. Here, many would say, lies the real crux of our problem. The changes of heart to which I have drawn attention—the intimations of a new, more considerate attitude to nature—are, on this view, of no fundamental importance. It is the crudest sort of sentimentalism—rubbish, my critics would say—to see in the spectacle of Boy Scouts collecting bottles or "conservation" groups preventing the construction of this or that freeway anything more than a middle-class game. At best the participants in such enterprises are like children constructing a sand barrier to protect their castle from the tide-turned sea. At most they distract attention from the fundamental issues. For what is at fault, so it is said, is the total system, the scientific-technological-industrial complex on which the middle-class reformers depend for their livelihood and its social position.

This is one of the points where I find myself least certain of my ground. The issues involved are so large, so complex, so difficult that I can do little more than raise them. To what degree is the further emancipation of the human spirit, in the East as well as in the West, inevitably tied up with the advance of industry? Can resources safely be diverted from industrial development to less-despoiling tertiary activities? Can industries be cabined and confined without undermining the spirit of enterprise which has brought them to birth? On the face of it, one can no doubt reply that the historical connections between industry and freedom are not inevitable. There can be heavy industry, as in Russia, where there is little or no freedom. Neither Greek democracy nor the Enlightenment came into being within a highly industrialised society. There are good reasons for believing, furthermore, that the emergence of large industrial complexes represents a threat to (rather than a necessary condition of) the further emancipation of mankind. Yet one is still left

[25] Only a Canute who took his courtiers seriously and pretended to sweep back the tide by sweeping with the ebb would think it necessary to defend sensuality, I shall no doubt be told, in so "permissive" an age.

But permissiveness is not necessarily sensual. More often than not, it takes the form of obscenity—a sub-variety of violence (who has ever seen a sensual American film?)—or of grossness as in the Berlin of the 1930s, with those female mud-wrestlers and transvestite sexual grotesqueries so vividly depicted in Fosse's film version of *Cabaret*. In spirit, both obscenity and grossness are Augustinian. For more on the importance and the limits of sensuality, see my book *The Perfectibility of Man.*

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uneasy about our capacity, without destroying liberty, effectively to redeploy our forces.

NOT UNCOMMONLY, WE ARE TOLD that what has to be abandoned is the ideal, much loved by politicians, of economic growth. This concept, however, is far from being a perspicuous one, and its ambiguities are of first importance. If economic growth is defined as the more effective utilisation of scarce resources, better economising, then what is commonly described as economic growth may in fact be economic recession.

Let us take a simple case. A park is built over to provide new office space. The park had made available such scarce commodities in an urban context as space, light, quiet, air, the sight and smell of flowers and trees and shrubs. Should not the construction of such buildings count as economic recession and the reverse process, the destruction of buildings to construct parks, as economic growth?

Not, no doubt, if growth is measured in terms of the Gross National Product, as this is conventionally defined. And this means that the supposition that the Gross National Product is a satisfactory measure of the quality of a society's life must certainly be abandoned. There is something wrong with any measure which suggests that it constitutes "economic growth" when parks, shops, hotels, theatres, neighbourhoods are destroyed in order to substitute banks and insurance offices. But throughout the developed world, in Japan as well as the United States, attempts are being made to find a better index of economic growth than the Gross National Product—"an amenities index", or a "stock index", which would take into account the destruction of amenities and natural resources as well as the flow-through of goods. The problems of constructing such an index are manifold; we have already touched on some of them. It is so much easier to quantify and compare the value of marketable goods than it is to compare the loss in amenity arising out of the destruction of a park with the economic gains from the offices which have taken its place.

Even presuming, however, that a solution can be found to this technical problem, we have still to ask whether our society can *afford* to substitute parks for office buildings, or more generally to reduce its Gross National Product. (It must be remembered that population is bound for some time to increase.) This is a point in respect to which some conservationists are remarkably insouciant.

> " By the use of such specious arguments as the loss of jobs, the lowering of living standards, and the raising of prices [one of them has written of the anti-ecologists], they are endeavouring to turn the citizen away from those who are striving to save a viable environment for future generations".[26]

But the spectacle of an unemployed man or an old-age pensioner, faced by rising prices, is at least as pitiable as the spectacle of an oil-soaked mutton bird. Arguments which direct attention to economic costs are not necessarily "specious."

ON THE OTHER SIDE, the question now is whether the liberal-democratic West can afford *not* to cut down its industrial activity or, at the very least, to alter its direction. We can perhaps speak of an "ecological transition", a point at which a country's industrial activity reduces rather than enhances the quality of life of its citizens, at which increased industrial activity, at least in its conventional forms, is profitable only when its costs are estimated by grossly inadequate methods of accounting, accounting which entirely ignores the public squalor it creates. Its citizens have a per capita income more than enough to permit them to live enjoyable lives, so far as that capacity depends on income. They have a national product sufficient to support adequate social services. Sweden, Japan, the United States (to take only three examples) have all passed that point; they can afford to devote part of their income to the solution of their ecological problems and to compensate, by way of better social services, for the resulting increases in prices. Whether they will do so is, of course, quite a different matter. But in fact their rate of population growth is already moving towards zero; to varying degrees (Japan more slowly), they are introducing sharp-toothed legislation against pollution; they are at least more aware than they were of the need to preserve wildernesses and wild species. Their middle-class ecological reformers reflect rather than disguise deep social forces. It is not absurd to hope that they may be able to find the resources to solve their major ecological problems.

ONE DIFFICULTY IS to avoid the costs of industrial slow-downs, or re-deployment, from falling very unevenly. It is not the reformers who would lose

[26] Denis Puleston, "Protecting the environment", *New Scientist* (28 September 1972), p. 558.

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their jobs if, to take a very minor proposal, regulations were introduced which made it illegal for automobile companies to change their models except in so far as by so doing they saved resources or diminished pollution. No doubt, every citizen might have to meet increased taxation. But that is nothing compared with seeing one's entire mode of life vanish overnight. It is cruel foolishness to suggest that people would be perfectly content to turn their lathes into pitchforks.

Ecological Innocence?

SO FAR WE have looked at changes in the rate of industrial growth only from the point of view of developed countries. But it could also greatly affect the developing countries, whose conviction that they would bear the brunt of any attempt on the part of Western nations to solve the world's ecological problems is clearly reflected in a number of the consensus resolutions put forward by the 1972 Stockholm Conference.

Consider, for example, the eleventh "principle":

> The environmental policies of all States *should enhance and not adversely affect the present or future development potential of developing countries.*

Or even more strikingly, the twenty-third principle, not in the original proposals but introduced in the course of discussion:

> Without prejudice to such criteria as may be agreed upon by the international community . . . it will be essential in all cases to consider the system of values prevailing in each country, and the extent of the applicability of standards which are valid for the most advanced countries but which may be *inappropriate and of unwarranted social cost for the developing countries.*

In other words, do not expect the developing countries to proceed as if *they* had reached the point of "ecological transition"!

It is sometimes suggested that the West cannot afford to lower its rate of industrial development precisely because it has the responsibility on its shoulders for the developing countries. This, as it stands, is hypocrisy. Aid to developing countries represents a minuscule fraction of the national income of most of the developed countries; the proportion is unlikely to increase. Much of the aid, furthermore, is useless, its nature determined by the interests of the donor rather than by the needs of the recipient. If—with the caveats I have already entered—the West were to give up its pollution-creating synthetic products and lower its tariffs, it might substantially improve the position of the developing countries while at the same time alleviating its own ecological problems. But that would involve real sacrifices.

One must not, however, exaggerate. Some forms of aid have been genuinely helpful. And the effectiveness of other forms of aid has been nullified by greed and corruption at the point of reception rather than at the point of donation. The developing countries are not unnaturally fearful lest, should the developed countries begin to concentrate on their ecological problems, even this degree of aid will cease. They fear, too, that if they attempt to limit industrial growth, the industrial countries will reduce their imports from the developing countries. If in the course of writing this, I have ever felt cheerfulness breaking in, a moment's reflection on the plight of the developing countries has been sufficient to dispel it.

SO LONG AS ONE KEEPS one's eyes solely on the liberal democratic West, the prospect is a little more encouraging, if only because the solutions for a number of problems converge. It is not only in order to solve their ecological problems that the Western countries need to transfer resources from industry to tertiary services. New transport systems, decentralisation, population control are as essential for urban as for ecological renewal. In order to solve that set of problems which Galbraith has collectively designated as "public squalor", the West, to a striking degree, would have to embark on precisely the courses of action which are essential for the solution of its ecological problems. (The opposite situation holds in the developing countries; there lies the tragedy.)

What troubles me, however, is that it is hard to see any way in which the West can change its economic habits which does not entail the shifting of decisions about choices from the market to governments. This has already happened, of course, to a large degree. Those income-earners—most of us—who have not learned the art of tax-evasion will have a large part, perhaps the greater part of their income spent for them by the government. Whether this process can be carried further in a manner which does not entail the gradual emergence of a bureaucratic police state and the stifling of enterprise is, for me, the question of questions. Is Sweden, as has recently been argued, the prime example of creeping totalitarianism?

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To SUM UP: I find it impossible to sum up, to arrive at any neat, tidy, quotable conclusions. As I have written, I have become more and more conscious of the complexity of every problem I have touched upon. I have tried to clear some intellectual ground, so that the alternatives before us are a little less obscured by undergrowth, but the problems remain. Yet nothing could be worse than to allow ourselves to slip into the doomsday mood of paranoic melancholia. The elderly, especially, are only too liable to this mood, whether taking pleasure in the reflection that by dying they will miss nothing but calamities or seeking an illusory grandeur as prophets of death and destruction. But in the young, too, apocalyptic prophecy can serve as a substitute for the overwhelming responsibility of action.

There is certainly a risk that we shall be utterly discouraged by the implications of Barry Commoner's "first ecological law"—"everything is connected to everything else"—for this makes it appear that to act at all is the height of imprudence. But fortunately I do not, before I swat a mosquito, have to calculate the consequences of my act on the sun's output of cosmic rays or the eutrophication of Lake Erie. It is just not true that everything I do has effects on *everything* else. What we do need always to remember, however—and this is sufficiently alarming—is that the unintended consequences of our actions are often surprisingly remote in time and place from those actions. (Skin cancer forty years after exposure to the sun; the excess fertiliser from my garden feeding algae in a remote stream.) Commoner's "law" somewhat resembles the old Heraclitean dictum "expect the unexpected." Valuable as a warning, it is useless as a guide to action.

Natural World, or Social Traditions?

WHAT IN GENERAL I WANT TO EMPHASISE is that, if the world's ecological problems are to be solved at all, it can only be by that old-fashioned procedure, thoughtful action. We may, of course, think to no purpose; by acting thoughtfully we may make matters worse. As we know quite well in our personal lives, we are sometimes saved by rashness, destroyed by prudence. Looking before we leap may make cowards of us. But there is no alternative policy. Mystical contemplation will not clean our streams or feed our peoples. No invisible guiding hand, whether Providence or History, guarantees our salvation. In the biosphere man has no tenure; his own folly may, at any time, lose him his precarious occupancy.

How and what we think, however, is determined not only by our brain structure but by the nature of the possibilities our society leaves open to us, the forms of thinking its traditions permit and encourage. The modern West, I have argued, leaves more options open than most other societies. Its traditions, intellectual, political, moral, are complex, diversified and fruitfully discordant. That gives it the capacity to grow, to change: it nurtures within itself the seeds of innumerable revolutions. It is inventive—not only technologically, but politically, administratively, intellectually. Its flexibility gives it a better, not a lesser, chance of solving its problems. Admittedly, its central Stoic-Christian traditions are not favourable to the solution of its ecological problems—those traditions which deny that man's relationships with nature are governed by any moral principles and assign to nature the very minimum of independent life. But they are not the only Western traditions and their influence is steadily declining.

If, a century hence, men live worse lives than they do today, that will not be because the traditions of the West have bemused them. Greed, ignorance, short-sightedness, fanaticism, are not Western inventions. How in fact they will live I have not dared to guess. My sole concern is that they should do nothing which will reduce their freedom of thought and action—whether by destroying the natural world which makes that freedom possible, or the social traditions which permit and encourage it.

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Geoffrey Grigson

Rock, Water of the Sea, and Fire and Air

Rock

Essential is Rock: in its extrusion let it not be
Too friable, so too slatternly. Also,
Let it not be Chalk. With that I am not at home.
Let it not be—as a rule—too rough, too
Resistant of hard frost. Granite (though not
Basalt) I refuse. For preference, let it release
Water, admit roots, breed flowers.

Water of the Sea

The property of Water of the Sea is colour.
Salt I disregard. Let its blue become rather more blue
Than light blue. Then let it spread
Shallowly over light and extensive sand
Into selected bays,
Making it green, but with blue still as neighbour.

I speak of Water of the Sea as
Not too cold anklet-water, not too cold
Thigh-water as well.
I speak of it also as that
On which reflections rarely may undistortedly float
Before darkness puts colour out.

Fire

Is less common.
Muscles of humble-bees generate heat on
Chilly days: fire is much enclosed.
Fires
I have made best
Aren't metaphors: they burn
Rubbish of gardens or of hedges
Till wet leaves
Explode, and released fed flames
Ripple up at last.

Air

Filling legs or breasts or big bellies of clothes
On lines on Monday—that is one thing.
But Air does not have to move horizontally, does not have
To go violent, have to turn into power.
Air
May rise also vertically
Supporting, along escarpments, gliders, birds
On infinite freshness, on which they play.
Especially good, not
Heated, not carrying frost, such Air is at the
Beginning of a special day.

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Unpublished Letters

Natalie Herzen

and the Bakunin/Nechayev Circle

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

24 AUGUST 1864 — *Bryanston House, Bournemouth, Hampshire*

WE ARE IN Bournemouth again, Masha dear, that charming place where we spent the autumn four years ago, after my trip to Dresden. We are having a fine time here—at least, *I* am, although I feel sad every now and then.

I have learned a great deal about the past—[Papasha's] "Past"—and I have come to treasure Papasha's love for us more and more of late. I feel we are becoming closer to each other. He has grown more affectionate, though he regards me as a "grown-up", not a child. We spend more time together and often go for walks, just the two of us. Consequently our parting is becoming more difficult, more painful, but I cannot work at home. Of course, I can't say it has been a complete waste of time, I have been reading, playing the piano and developing my mind in other ways. But everything distracts me—the children, the conversation—and I cannot concentrate sufficiently on my painting. I feel I must spend the winter at least in a place where none of these interests intrude, [I must] be in an artistic milieu.

Here in England, you see, we do not know a single artist; and, distances being what they are in London, it is so difficult to do anything; we can only bring ourselves to pay a visit to an art gallery once a year. So it is very likely that we will winter once again in Rome. . . .

Natalie Herzen to Alexander Herzen

22 MARCH 1865 — *136 Via Felice, Roma*

FORGIVE ME, my dear kind Papasha, indeed I feel I have been dreadfully absentminded of late. But don't be angry, don't think I am forgetting you or thinking of you less often; no, I often see you in my dreams and when I awake I feel so vexed and grieved at not being able to hug and kiss you and everybody in reality. . . .

For a note about the author see page 84.

I am sending you my photograph, taken here in Rome. Many people think that I am very like Napoleon I, but that's nothing new; new, though, is the fact that Mimi Oppenheim contrived it. What is your opinion? Everyone here likes it very much.

How odd, Papasha, that a few hours before receiving your letter I had been writing and complaining that we had no Russian acquaintances now, that we had found ourselves in a circle of Germans and had become stuck there. So it seems we share the same view. I too am vexed. But one thing I will say to you—I doubt if these are any better than the others. At Mme Schwabe's we have met many English girls, and they are all leading such an empty life, you simply cannot imagine. Mornings and afternoons spent in visits and more visits, and in the evenings dances and parties, all of them in their own circle: today *chez* Mrs So-and-so, tomorrow Mrs What-have-you, the next day at Lady —'s, the whole season exactly like London.

The Russians I am unable to judge, since I know absolutely no one except Mlle Kapnist, who has spent so much time away from town this winter that I have seen her only two or three times, and then only glimpsed her for a minute or two. She is very often to be seen in the Italian circle, which is easy for her since her brother serves in the Embassy. She goes to the balls at Doria's, Borghese's, and all the ministers. The other Russians probably lead the same sort of life. What have we in common with them, and what would be the point of making their acquaintance? . . .

Gregorovius visits us frequently and we give him English lessons, that is, we make him read Macaulay's essays about the India of Lord Clive. He in his turn brings me various books to read. I have just finished Calderon's tragedy *Das Leben ist ein Traum*. Do you know it? It all takes place in Poland. A Polish king brings up his son in the wilds, in a remote castle in a forest, because he has learned from the stars that the son will be a tyrant and a villain. Gregorovius advises me to read two or three more things by Calderon, and then some of the ancient Greek poets.

Your TATA H.

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Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

26 MAY 1866 [*Geneva*]

IT IS UNPLEASANT to refuse, but what can one do when one feels that it is never the *right person*. Just this last summer I had to refuse someone. And I myself was vexed and grieved by it. He was a young Russian, so good and clever and serious, and was studying the natural sciences (in my opinion an *important quality*). Papa had taken a great liking to him. But he simply wasn't what I was looking for. He was almost too practical-minded; or, how should I express it, I am not seeking after idealism (may God forbid, we leave that to the Germans, *n'en deplaise à Reichel*), but, for example, it was clear that the arts did not exist for him, despite all his desire to understand and appreciate them—it all smacked of utilitarianism, and offended me. Next winter I shall be going once more to Italy, and this time again to Florence. . . . I shall remain there, but Papa will return and live in the little apartment with Ogarev. It is quite possible that first Papasha and I will go on a short excursion to *"Como"* to pay a call on Garibaldi. The headquarters of the volunteers will be there.

NATALIE HERZEN

So Europe will soon be once again flowing with blood. This terrible war! Many people here desire it and are waiting impatiently for it to begin. But the more I hear and think about the whole of this business of war, the more I am disgusted, repelled and frightened by it. Man becomes worse than a wild beast and millions of people kill each other, for the most part ignorant of their aim and unthinking of the consequences and of the sufferings of their near and dear ones after every death, every wound. Read the next issue of *The Bell* and you will see how good life is in Russia too at the moment. Reading about those *horrors* really makes one's hair stand on end. That wretched Karakozov, he certainly did Russia a good turn by his shot. There is no end to the arrests—all our acquaintances have been arrested and are in the hands of Muravev, and that's as good as saying they are being tortured. Karakozov is a fanatic, that's clear, and there was no conspiracy there; but the opportunity to "clean up Russia" was too good to miss.

And look how they're tackling the job—the student Belgin was arrested and ordered to implicate Nikolay Utin in the affair—a young *émigré* who has been living perfectly peaceably and quietly here. Belgin refused to lie, so they treated him to a whipping. He preferred death to *falsehood* and hanged himself one night. . . .

Your TATA HERZEN

Alexander Herzen to Sasha Herzen

31 JULY 1869 [*Brussels*]

WHY ALL MY most legitimate desires and dreams burst one after another like soap bubbles I do not understand, but it is so. I have a job to do that must be continued after my death. From my place of exile I have created a name for you by virtue of which you would be received with open arms in a country where, despite all its trivialities and its sombre sides, there is a future simmering of colossal dimensions. And then, while others are trading, working, and seeking after a dowry, I am pointing to the capital that lies in the clutches of the Russian government.

You were the first to leave—you went your own way, you made a success of it, and you are content. Olga is a foreigner, thanks to Meysenbug. On Tata I had pinned my highest hopes—she has our tastes, *notre génie* (in the sense of *génie de la langue*, as they say)—she has been altogether closer to me, and I shall regard her loss as one of the heaviest blows [I have experienced]. Yes, dear Sasha, do not be amazed that I use the word *loss*. In our foreign circle I am a foreigner, a perpetual outsider. What can I do? We have become so tightly knit that it is not only the ultra-socialists in Europe who regard us as outsiders. And the Schiffs, in addition, are an odd, eccentric lot—you once compared Maurice with Ogarev, but you are mistaken. Maurice Schiff may have far more

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serious qualities and talents than Ogarev—but he does not have that aesthetic, mellow nature of his. All the misfortunes of Ogarev and his whole life stem from wine—he has drunk himself to ruin, but even the remnants are impressive.

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

23 JANUARY 1870 *Paris*

WHERE SHALL I begin, my dear Masha? Perhaps you have already learned from the newspapers. Papasha is no more. He died on Friday 21 at three o'clock in the morning. I have lost the thing that was dearest to me in the whole world. He did not know himself how greatly I loved him, how tormented I was by anything that grieved him. How I forced myself to be cheerful so that he might think I was happy.

I embrace all of you and kiss you affectionately.

We are all here except poor Ogarev. Sasha was too late and only saw the body. Where we shall go and when, I don't know. Write to me here.

Michael Bakunin to Nikolay Ogarev

23 JANUARY [1870] [*Locarno*]

OGAREV! Is it really true? Has he really died? It seems so. Your dreadful telegram can have no other meaning, and with your letter which I received yesterday it can have no other meaning. You poor thing! Poor Natalies, both of them! Poor Liza! My friend, words fail me in the face of such misfortunes. No, there is one thing I can say: we shall die in action. If you can, write to me—just a line.

Your old, and now your only [old] friend
M. B[AKUNIN]

And now what kind of a future lies in store for Tata—in that circle? . . .

In short, "let this cup pass from me." Keep this letter—if it would be appropriate then show it to her. I shall write to her—if my fears grow even greater. If all this is not so, then write to me at once—I shall read your letter with tears of joy. If it is too late for advice, I shall retire even further into myself, for all my fifty-seven years and my old age.

These are painful times. . . .

Natalie Herzen to Sergey Nechayev

17 FEBRUARY 1870 [*Paris*]

I DID NOT TELL my brother *anything*. He brought the letter, asked who had sent it, and wished to read it. I refused; he guessed who the sender was and put a few questions to me; I replied with a mixture of answers and invention. It all seems suspicious to him, particularly the fact of my wishing to go alone. They tell me it is folly, capriciousness, that I have wasted a great deal [of money] as it is and now I want to abandon a room which has already been paid for—that my duty here is to be of assistance, while *there* there is nothing I can do. Perhaps it can be arranged more easily after my brother's departure. I shall try to leave on Monday evening—but I cannot promise for sure—there can be no question of my setting off any earlier.

I shall most probably never see you again—to my sorrow. After I left you I read a part of what you had given me: it would have been better if we could have talked a little longer.

It is hard not to trust you as an individual. But knowing that you work like a *Jesuit*, I shall naturally never know when you are telling me the truth. It is all the same to you, but I find it somewhat unpleasant. Be assured, though, that I will carry out all your commissions as precisely as possible.

I press your hand and hope that despite all we shall meet somewhere, and so I say—until we meet again. . . .

If you are not too pressed, and so can write [and tell me] *where* and *how* you are (even when you have no commissions), I shall be most grateful to you.

20 FEBRUARY 1870 [*Paris*]

HOW YOU could find the slightest trace of "indifferentism" in my last note I really do not understand. I foresaw and warned you that there would be considerable obstacles. If I could act openly it would be a different matter, although even then there would be a hard struggle, because they would *all* try to restrain and dissuade me. *Everyone* here regards your activities as some kind of madness. Upon receiving your first letter I wished to go at once; my brother prevented me, saying there were *various papers* I had to sign. All these intolerable comedies came to an end only on Thursday—I had put my signature twenty or thirty times. When the whole thing was over, I announced my desire to leave on Monday. This caused such a commotion—it was simply horrible—and if I had not promised *not to leave* without the others, I think we would all have fallen to quarrelling. And do you really think that it was so easy to abandon everything at a moment's notice! To hear reproaches from all sides. Furthermore, one of my friends told me that "this senseless desire to go is proof positive that I have *not yet recovered*"! Indeed, if this restless, well-nigh feverish state, in which I have

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been ever since my return, continues, I shall very likely start to ramble again!

Everything I said to you was spoken in all sincerity. How could you, how can you still think it was all *mere words*?

These ephemeral obstacles, as you call them, are not in the least ephemeral for myself—they are a *terrible torment*.

You were surprised by my vacillation. When trust is formed too hastily, it is never *lasting*—or rarely so. Moreover, I am very mistrustful by nature. I must acquaint myself much more closely with the cause, and see much more clearly by what means you wish to achieve your aims, before I can have *absolute* trust.

I do indeed display a certain lack of independence, an indecisiveness, a timidity—I myself can see it, and will strive with all my might to change it all. . . .

"You cannot reason clearly or act judiciously—just as before; therefore we cannot and must not let you go alone." That is what they tell me. And you must admit, you have indeed not given me very much time in which to think all this over properly.

My brother had left; at this very moment he will be lowering the coffin. But of course you will have no patience for that; you will probably say that it is sentimentalism to be thinking still of Papa. . . .

Michael Bakunin to Natalie Herzen and Nathalie Tuchkova-Ogareva

21 FEBRUARY 1870 *Locarno*

TO BOTH THE NATALIES,

I did not want to write to you during those first days, because words cannot assuage a grief such as yours. And anyway, I now no longer have the absurd intention of trying to console you. I wish merely to press your hands as a friend, and indicate, if you will permit me, as an old man who has been connected with you for some ten years now, indicate a way for you to find not consolation but satisfaction, and that is, through the cause. We are continually pondering how by our combined efforts we might continue Herzen's work and translate his theory into practice in accordance with the demands of the age and the present state of affairs. Everything that Herzen thought, was courageous enough to think—and as a theorist he is unsurpassed—we practical workers, who are humbler, less gifted and of lesser repute, want to do. We want to resurrect *The Bell*, the finest monument we can erect in his memory—*help us*. For the time is past when a line was artificially and forcibly drawn between the rights and vocation of women, and those of men. Your responsibilities are identical with ours.

True, you, the older Nathalie, have a special task—your daughter. But you love Herzen, you have always been associated with his work, both intellectually and emotionally, you have ventured far beyond the close confines of family life—you have an obligation to continue his work, even though it be in new circumstances and forms.

You, my poor Natalie the younger, have no aim in life. Your heart is filled with love, your lucid mind with power. Nature has richly endowed you—yet at the same time you have no ground underfoot and, leading a life of idle dilettantism, you are a disoriented, bewildered creature. "What is there I can do?" you will ask, if you decide to ask and do not lose your temper. Work with us for the Russian cause. Both of you have done enough of this rambling and roaming about the wide world like pallid phantoms. Gather yourselves together. Let us all rally around Ogarev, our old saint and Herzen's best friend, and let each one of us, on the general advice, do what he can, to the best of his ability, for the liberation of the Russian people. Let us not be over-modest, but let us not hold ourselves in excessive esteem either—it is not [our] talents that count, but the cause. Two heads are better than one. We may quarrel occasionally, perhaps even heatedly, but that is no misfortune. We shall have our quarrel, but shall not let dissension part us—we shall reach a peaceable settlement. Herzen was the last Russian to act in *isolation*. The time has now come for *clear thinking* and *collective action*. It is to this collectivity that I summon you. . . .

M. BAKUNIN

Natalie Herzen to Sergey Nechayev

20 MARCH 1870 [*Geneva*]

I AM STILL unwell, and still in bed; I shall not go out this morning. I will see how things are after lunch, and if I feel better I will come and help you. If you will not be at home, leave an explanation of what I am to do.

When I recall our conversations, I can see contradictions in some of your words. Do you remember, for instance, saying once: "But do not confuse that which concerns myself *personally* with *the cause*." But then on several occasions you said something quite different such as: "I am a whole man. What concerns the cause concerns *myself* also; I cannot separate the two. There is only one question. I am talking only about the cause." I must confess that there is something here that is unclear to me. I am of the opinion that these [two] questions must certainly

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be kept separate. And lest there be any misunderstanding, do not forget that the moment I realised that, as well as the cause, you were asking about *personal relationships* too, I at once replied in the negative, and repeated my reply several times. You tell me that I do not know my own mind. You are a strange man. I ought to know whether or not I love you; well, I am telling you once more—no, I do not. I am very sorry that you have come to feel this sentiment, but I am not in the slightest to blame for that, and I repeat that I had noticed absolutely *nothing* until the moment you spoke directly of it. Some very long letters have just arrived from Italy. Until our meeting.

Sergey Nechayev to Natalie Herzen

27 MARCH 1870 [*Geneva*]

IF YOU can come especially early tomorrow then do so (about 8–9 o'clock). You must. [Come] quietly and [go] straight into the corner room.

Yours head over heels

Ah, if only you would think more, and more straightforwardly and consistently!

Give free rein to your mind, do not constrain it with comfortable predudices!

You will soon cease to be tossed by the waves of the tempestuous sea and reach the shore of the promised land if you are more consistent.

Do you know how much pain you cause me?...

Natalie Herzen to Sergey Nechayev

28 MARCH 1870 [*Geneva*]

I shall not come and see you until I receive what I mentioned in my letter this morning.

I say this in all seriousness.

And if you do not wish to comply [with my request] then you can send everything to me here with explanations. I will do the writing and copying.

What is this about Aga's eyes?

Sergey Nechayev to Natalie Herzen

[UNDATED] [*Geneva*]

I SPEAK with you simply and straightforwardly, and I do not want to have somehow to speak seriously as well. Stop acting so capriciously simply because you are being treated as a valuable person and not a spoilt little miss. After all, I am not Tchor[zewski].

These whims are beneath you. They are nonsensical. And you are a woman of sense!

Instead of wasting your brainpower reflecting on proprieties and improprieties, you ought to meditate on the real essence of life and not its outward semblance. Or do you want to be a drawing-room ornament for the rest of your life? Well, do as you see fit.

There has been some gossip here. Its origin must be elucidated. Come without fail, or I shall come to you myself.

Yours

Oz[erov] has not left because you were not here this morning. Bring the money for Czerniecki.

Natalie Herzen to Sergey Nechayev

31 MARCH 1870 [*Geneva*]

How YOU do pass from one extreme to the other. One day I am your "most precious creature in existence", the next a "monster"—and why those crude, cruel reproaches?

I know myself that my death would be no loss; two or three people would mourn for a while, others would be glad—and that is all. I have told you myself plainly and simply that up till now I have done nothing—but I am willing to do something. I "*insult the word love.*" What right have you to say that? "In order to love, one must know what for." That is quite true. Have I not said to you that your affection for me is entirely without foundation?

Why did you fall in love with me before I had done anything?

But it is better not to speak of all this—the storm and the sorrow are not yet passed and gone.

I am very glad that our meeting will not have been in vain; I wish your pamphlet success with all my heart.

I shall be coming tomorrow: prepare what there is to be done.

Natalie Herzen to Sergey Nechayev

31 MARCH 1870 [*Geneva*]

DO NOT place me in such a ridiculous position. You are well aware that I cannot go on visiting Ogarev while you are there. You will not leave me in peace; you do not know how to treat people in a civilised fashion; and there is Aga, continually asking me to come and saying that there is work for me. Do be reasonable, please. Write to me what I asked you. I assure you that for myself, these questions—or rather, this question—*is settled absolutely*. I beg you to torment me no longer and never speak of this matter. And if I cannot be of assistance to you in anything, then say so at once.

N.H.

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I really have caught a cold—that evening, coming home (hungry) with Czerniecki. If you fulfil my request I shall come tomorrow.

TUESDAY

YOU CAN see for yourself that all of what happened yesterday evening and the day before was extremely unpleasant for me. Most annoying of all is that you could suppose that N[athalie's] decision was taken *after* the bad news, *after* what happened chez Aga, etc. The truth is that she had long since found the whole thing *embarrassing and unpleasant*. But I, in my stupidity, or my absentmindedness, had not noticed this, otherwise I would have spoken directly to you and yesterday's scene would not have taken place. I assure you that I am heartily sorry.

You know my decision—therefore you cannot and *must not* torment me further. I have received a letter from B[akunin] for you; I can send it via Z[amperi]ni or otherwise: name some person. . . .

I will not come and visit you: in the first place, for the various reasons we have spoken of, and secondly, because it would not be good for you—ladies attract attention.

Take care.

Can I give the money to Z[amperini]?

Sergey Nechayev to Natalie Herzen

[UNDATED]

[RECEIVED 26 MAY 1870] [*Monthey*]

DEAR TATA,

Writing to you is becoming a difficult task, but one that I love. You are well aware *why* I cannot speak with you in roundabout phrases, why I cannot conceal what I think and why I am powerless to restrain the ardour (or, as you express it, the coarseness) that gushes straight from my soul. Nevertheless, in my thoughts about you, my conceptions of you, there is much, so much that is utterly opposed to your milieu, that conflicts with the habits you have not tried to lose or somehow or other shake off. In short, my open, straightforward words with you are frequently intended as a rebuke, a reproach for your indecisiveness, your weakness, your hesitation and those other qualities from which you once promised me you would strive to liberate yourself. That is why you have often found my words disagreeable, but I have nevertheless spoken and will speak them. I know that you will come upon no compliments in this letter either.

During the first days after our meeting you expressed dissatisfaction with your petty life, but you did dimly realise what the reasons were for that pettiness. Life is petty when there is no aim to it, when a person is conscious that his existence is unnecessary to all except people of the same trivial ilk, when a person has so little faith in himself and in his powers that he cannot bring himself to make any decision to take any active step on his own initiative, but waits for fate (that most foolish of notions) sooner or later to give him a push. And sure enough, people like these are jogged along by fate in the guise of papas and mamas and various guardian-angels-custodians such as. . . .

As long as a person moves only in such a milieu he feels little discontentment; he is a corpse, and therefore may be tranquil, for bondage and servitude do not offend him. But once he has encountered *other* people, once he has caught a glimpse of independence in someone, he can no longer live the life of *contented ease*, he must either leap boldly out of the mire or, consciously sinking into it, despise himself more and more until his powers of thought finally cease and the person turns into a vegetable.

Until now you have been living an utterly trivial life, without aim and without object. If anyone were to ask you: Why are you living?—you would be unable to give an answer. Remember your letter: "I know that my death would be no loss; two or three people would feel sorry and mourn for a while. . . ."

My heart was near breaking when I read that admission of a person's own uselessness. And it was a young, fresh girl writing it, who had not yet made any attempt to live. So whence that despair,

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[the despair] of a moribund person; that fear of casting off your fetters? Here we have the fruit of your meaningless past life, the fruit of foolish cares and worries which have surrounded you ever since your childhood and so accustomed you to being in swaddling-clothes that even now you feel yourself, as it were, bound [by them].

Yes, if you know that you are useless then *cease* to live as you have lived till now! Make a move! Shake off your cowardice! Look at others with the eyes of a living, feeling person and not the dull gaze of a rich heiress who fears robbery and deceit at every moment. There are many good people—join us, work, and most of all, free yourself from this bondage, this servitude gilded with the tawdry glitter of feigned attachment.

This absence of a life's object has prevented you from developing firm convictions to guide you in your actions. Without convictions you have been weak-willed, shy, inexperienced and timorous. You have always avoided conflict and struggle because a struggle without an aim is ridiculous. This is why you have been totally under the influence of your milieu (and it has been a very bad one), and you have never attempted to repulse it. This is why M. Alexeevna —herself already an effete woman—regards you with pity and believes that without her advice you will perish. She told me, by the way: "When I strongly objected to her intention to undertake a second disguise, Tata blushed and became flustered, kissed me and agreed with me. It grieved me to see her so timid and obedient: so little was needed to dissuade her," and so on. I will tell you the rest some other time.

To her you are a positively spineless creature who continually needs nannying (this is also how your brother apparently sees you). It pained and distressed me to hear those semi-contemptuous remarks, ill-concealed by her concern. I almost came to blows over you. Something makes me believe in your power. I have suggested that you come out of hibernation and go with us towards our common aim. I believe in you, believe that you are still fresh and can grow strong and develop in the service of the cause. In my treatment of you I have acted rashly and not altogether wisely. (Do you know why?) I have frequently forgotten your weakness, your lack of independence. I have been abrupt and have frightened you. You have begun to shun me. How painful it has become at times, but still I have not lost my confidence that the truth will prevail. You are in constant fear of deceit, cunning, and intrigue, and you sit idle. I ask you: when is there a greater danger of your falling victim to intrigues—when you follow a definite path with a clear goal before your eyes, scrutinising every step taken by yourself and your fellow-travellers, or when you are in a position like yours, without any plan for the future, and totally lacking in understanding of life, in love and in commitment?

I would like you to give me your answer after independent reflection and not under the influence of a conversation with anyone else.

Write, please, as soon and as much as you can.

A a result of the recent alarm over the persecutions, the plan for my own personal participation in the cause is undergoing considerable changes. Answer me as plainly as possible, and if the little trust you have in me is still alive, then I would suggest—you know what. . . .

Natalie Herzen to Sergey Nechayev

27 MAY 1870 [*Geneva*]

WELL, YOU HAVE excelled yourself; I did not think you capable of writing letters such as the one you wrote to Natalya Alexeevna. You are capable both of courtesy and flattery—well, it is simply charming.

Regarding your observations: I repeat that many of them are just, and just observations and reproaches do not anger me. It is not your words which anger me, you know that perfectly well; but your outrageous, despotic manner. . . .

WEDNESDAY (MORNING)

IF I were sure that there really was no one except myself who could carry out your commissions, and that it was essential that they be carried out, then I would come to you. But I am tired of your long conversations and especially of your dreadful behaviour, and I positively do not wish it to continue in this way. I do not want to participate in any intrigues: therefore, I do not understand what commissions I can carry out. Use *your people* for them. What makes you ask if I have taken fright? What could happen to me? Absolutely nothing: The People's Vengeance alone may desire to punish me or teach me a lesson.

Do send the money to poor B[akunin]—he is probably waiting impatiently.

Understand this too: I ought not to come and see you, *for your own sake*, that is, so that you don't get into hot water again.

Also, remember that you are not to call me *Tata*; I find it unpleasant.

N.H.

After talking to Z[amperi]ni I am once again convinced that I certainly ought not to come and visit you.

Did you know they are promising 5,000 francs to whoever runs you to earth! How repulsive!

Please keep quiet for a few days at least, and take Z[amperi]ni's advice. He will arrange every-

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thing when he can. Meanwhile, write to me through him—if it really is necessary.

But the best thing would be for you to go away for a time—really. . . .

M. Bakunin to N. Ogarev, V. Ozerov, S. Serebrennikov and Natalie Herzen

9 JUNE 1870 *Locarno*

HERE, MY FRIENDS, is at last the end of my enormous letter to the Baron [Nechayev]. Please read it all attentively. You will find in it many *longueurs* and repetitions, but I hope that you will agree with its contents and, most important, with its conclusion. If you do agree, will you signify it at the end of the letter by your signature—there is enough space left for all remarks—and try to convey it as soon as possible and, if possible, in person and by hand through Ozerov to the Baron. I have not re-read it and wrote without reflection straight from my head and heart.

The letter is so long, so unbearably long, that I am afraid to ask Tata or friend Sasha, and if not them then Serebrennikov, to copy it from the beginning and keep the copy—nevertheless this is essential for me and for us all.

I hope you will be pleased with my reply to Lopatin which I shall send you tomorrow together with Lopatin's letter (which must be read by Serebrennikov and kept in your hands as neutrals and witnesses; it must also be read to the Baron but not given to him).

Our friend, the Baron, has completely drowned himself in lies and this must be ended. It was with good reason that for several years, from 1863 to 1867, I kept myself apart from Russians and Russian affairs. As soon as I touched them I got into a muck, heap, but now I want to keep up with them. It is necessary to unravel the whole thing patiently and put it on a sound basis. If you want to help me, I hope that together we will succeed.

The main thing for the moment is to save our erring and confused friend. In spite of all he remains a valuable man, and there are few valuable men in the world.

Therefore, let us save him together. We will not let Lopatins, Zhukovskys and Utins [. . .] him finally into the mud. First of all it is necessary that he should help us himself—and all our efforts must now be directed to this end.

10 JUNE 1870 *Locarno*

WELL, MY DEAR FRIENDS, here is my reply to Lopatin. . . . I am sending you also Lopatin's letter to me, which you simply must read, but on no account let it fall into the hands of Baron Neville—keep it in your possession as a document which you might need.

Please send my reply on to Lopatin at once, but first make a copy of it to read to the Baron and also to keep in your possession as a document. Whom should I ask to undertake the laborious task of copying it, if not Serebrennikov, who will apparently now be left with no occupation? For myself, I am swamped by various writings and compositions which I shall never have time to complete.

In my reply to Lopatin I have tried as far as possible not to condemn the Baron. A difficult, almost impossible task. Having once convinced myself of his falsehood, I had to call it barefaced lying and so to express my suspicion—not to say my certainty—that he had withheld my letter to Lyubavin.

What can one expect? Our friend, under the spell of this accursed Jesuitical system, has taken to lying and scheming to the point of folly. I say again, we must all of us make every effort to dissuade him from this course which will mean the ruin of himself and the cause.

I repeat for the hundredth time—he is an invaluable person, the most energetic and committed of all the Russians of our acquaintance. He is extremely obstinate, true, but very clever with it, though hardly wise; therefore, by preserving all his valiant features, above all his iron energy, ruthless even to himself, his utter self-abnegation and his passionate and total devotion to the cause—he can change all that is bad in himself.

But it is imperative that he make up his mind to cure himself this very moment, for it will be impossible for us to remain behind him any longer if he does not change his course and his system, and we shall be obliged to break our links with him not only for our honour's sake but for the sake of the cause itself.

His first act as a conspirator and revolutionary ended in what was for him a terrible and shameful fiasco. To persist with a lie which has [already] proved fatal would be unforgivably stupid on his part, and for us to continue to follow him in a direction which we have acknowledged as mistaken and base would be more than stupid.

Ogarev, I absolutely insist that you give me, without delay, through our friends and natural intermediaries, Tata, Ozerov and Serebrennikov, a written affidavit that the entire fund was given over to Nechayev by you and that I had no concern whatsoever in its administration. It is unnecessary to draw up any accounts for this purpose, after all. We shall compile detailed accounts later and demand receipts from Nechayev then. For the moment we can sign a declaration of this kind, worded briefly but

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clearly and firmly, in order to avert the possibility of any misunderstanding. And your statement can, I believe, be signed by Tata in all good faith, since she was in fact a witness of that transfer, at which I really was not present and the details of which are unknown to me. *I urgently demand such a statement of you, demand it in the name of justice and friendship, and you have not the right to refuse it to me.* It might prove essential to me in view of the malicious and filthy slanders being propagated by Mr Utin, who, I happen to know, is assembling a collection of facts against me to send to Marx. Ozerov writes to me that what is stopping you is a fear of doing damage to the *cause*, that is, something of the nature of a *raison d'État*. But that is unlike you, my dear Ogarev. Such a Jesuitical consideration, a consideration of state, is entirely out of keeping with your character, your spirit and your habits—truth and justice above all, such has always been your motto. Can it be that you too want to become, and can become, a Jesuit in your old age? All this is nonsense, and, moreover, has absolutely nothing to do with *the cause*. It is time we understood, after all, that Nechayev, in spite of all those precious qualities which earned him your and my trust, is, nevertheless, not himself the cause made flesh. The cause is one thing, and he is another, and to identify him with the cause means to abase and to annihilate the cause. First of all we must explain this to [Nechayev] himself, so that he ceases to think of himself as the Louis XIV of revolution: *"L'État (the cause) c'est moi."* Facts of the most tangible kind have proved to us that his dictatorship, the dictatorship of his Committee (which comes to the same thing, because 3/4 or 9/10 of the Committee consists indubitably of himself), that this dictatorship has had disastrous consequences both in Russia and abroad, and therefore the time has come to put an end to it. To continue believing in it and blindly following it would be more than folly on our part—it would be a crime. We know little about the facts in Russia, but what we do know, and what we know as a certainty, weighed against and compared with his own stories, is very bad. On the other hand, we have a full and detailed knowledge of the facts of what is happening abroad, and these facts are sufficient to convince us that [. . .] the Committee, that is, Nechayev, is filled with energy, passionate activity, devotion to the cause. But he also displays an enormous, staggering lack of wisdom and inward integrity. He has based his entire organisation on systematic deceit and the entanglement of people. That is bad, and bad too is the fact that with all his ardent desire to dupe each and everyone, he has not even discovered how to conceal his deception. All his ruses are transparently thin and have been the ruses of either a child or an ostrich hiding its head behind a tree but unable to hide its huge body. This incapacity of Nechayev's for skilful deception cheers me. It means, on the one hand that falsehood has not yet succeeded in permeating him entirely, in becoming second nature to him, and therefore it will not be difficult for him to rid himself of it. But, on the other hand, taking into account his natural intelligence, this lack of skill bears witness to a dire insufficiency of experience, practical reason, understanding and knowledge of people and things; and what dictator can there be without reason? Can the cause succeed without reason?

We love him, we believe in him, and we are expecting of him activity in the future which will be of great benefit to the people, and this is precisely why we have to halt him on his false and fatal path—but we shall not manage to halt him by force of words or reasoning. Words and reason have no effect upon natures like that of Nechayev, which respect only facts; facts alone can act upon them. That is to say, we have to halt Nechayev by force of the facts. If we were to set about protesting against him by using reasoning and words alone while continuing in fact to follow him blindly, he would listen half-distractedly and half-ironically to us, and continue to ruin the cause and exploit us in the most unscrupulous manner. But if we tell him the truth, all of us together, not individually, and declare that we shall go no further with him along this path, but will separate from him if he will not desist from it, he will have second thoughts and probably give way—and if he does not, then let us have nothing more to do with him! But he will be obliged to yield. We have given him so much proof both of our devotion to the cause and our friendship with him that he cannot doubt the sincerity of our actions and our words. Moreover, he has not many friends left either abroad or in Russia itself. He has been abandoned by everybody, and all respectable people like Lopatin, and all the not-so-respectable ones, such as Utin and *compagnie*, are slinging mud at him.

At this moment, the most critical in his life and the most decisive for all his future activity, the friendly voice of a whole group of honest people willing to support him if he agrees to abandon an obviously pernicious system, but at the same time [. . .] to abandon him if, in his *vanity*, obduracy and wilfulness, he wishes to persist in it—such a voice can save him.

He has now to perform one final act of self-determination, gain one final victory over himself, over his *vanity* which appears to be greater than we had imagined. The total shipwreck which has

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overtaken him both in Russia and abroad must open his eyes. He must acknowledge and have the strength and nobility to admit to us that he was mistaken in his choice of system, persons, and means, and that it behoves him now to change his course and embark upon a new task, on a new basis, using only that portion of the old material which will truly suit his purpose on that new course.

If he proves capable of performing a feat of this nature and achieving such a difficult victory over his pride (which is all the greater for being concealed), over his wilfulness, then he will indeed be a fine man, and we shall be able to go along with him and perhaps even follow him with full confidence. If he is incapable of doing so, or unwilling to do so, then we shall have no alternative but to break with him for the sake of our conscience, our convictions, and the good of the cause itself. Such, for the present, at least, is my immutable resolve.

In what way can the declaration I require of you, my dear Aga—and which I consider I have the right to require of you—harm the cause? In the first place, it will remain a secret, as a document in the possession of our friends, who, it goes without saying, will not divulge its existence. It will be made public only in case of extreme necessity.

And besides that, you must demand—we all must demand—of Nechayev that he give you and all of us a written statement to the effect that he received, first, one part of the Bakhmetev fund from Herzen and yourself, and then the whole of the remainder from you alone, since you had the sole right to dispose of the entire Bakhmetev fund, and that he alone, with or without the Committee's knowledge (we cannot know which), was in charge of the fund and spent it as he saw fit. Not to demand this of him would be a weakness on our part, sheer ignominy, not service to the cause. The affair is clear and demands clarity: the Committee, whether real or imaginary, does not and never did conceal its existence. It has proclaimed itself in preposterous letters to Lyubavin and Natalya Alexeevna, and even in printed form in the *People's Vengeance*.

We—that is, you and I—can be rebuked for having recognised this Committee: I, in print; you, in fact, by handing over the fund. But there can be no doubt that we recognised it as the sole representative of the serious revolutionary cause in Russia. It was on that basis that you gave the fund to Nechayev, as a representative of the Committee, and it was in that capacity that Nechayev took it from you. Consequently there is nothing to hide from the public—everything was done properly.

But do you know what I am beginning to fear? If Nechayev does not want to, or thinks it inconvenient to give you a receipt for the fund, that will be not so much for fear of the public as through misgivings at the thought of his own friends, the members of the so-called Committee, whom perhaps he is deceiving in exactly the same way as he has been deceiving us. He might have told them that he received from you only a part of the fund, or that the fund was administered not at his sole discretion but in conjunction with you and me, or any other lie he thought it necessary to tell, not for his own personal gain, of course, but for the good of the cause. I have a mass of evidence that he has employed his Jesuitical lying absolutely everywhere, including even amongst his own Committee-members. Trusting and believing in no one, he has come to the point where he considers himself the sole and exclusive revolutionary, and with an obduracy comparable to Elpidin's, believes he has the right to dupe each and every man in the name of the revolution. I fervently hope that my fears prove unfounded, but I am very much afraid that they are justified. In any case it is obvious to me that only fear of his friends, not of the revolutionary public or of his enemies, can stop him from giving you this receipt.

That is why you and all of us must persistently and unanimously demand it of him for the salvation of the cause.

I end this letter by expressing my hope that after you have read to the last word my long letter to Nechayev, you will agree with its conclusions and on that basis will consent, together with myself, to make a determined joint attempt to save Nechayev from his disastrous falsehood and the common cause from defeat.

Natalie Herzen to Michael Bakunin

16 JUNE 1870 *Genève*

I HOPE YOU WILL NOT reproach me, Mikhail Alexandrovich, for having shown a distrust of your *protégé* and all his affairs? You ought to think it natural that everything concerning your affairs was *obscure* for me, that I vacillated for so long, striving to discover the truth and attain a clear understanding, and, having satisfied myself that that was well-nigh impossible, decided to withdraw and to have nothing to do with these *obscure* Russian affairs—despite the interminable talking and arguing, and despite all the efforts of yourself, Ogarev and Nechayev to convince me that I would come to grief if I *refused* to participate in them!

I could not conceive of anyone's really being attracted to that repulsive Jesuitical system, being loyal to it to such a shockingly inhuman

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degree as is Nechayev. For with him, consistency has reached the point of a monstrosity!

How can you still envisage the possibility of working with him after all that has passed between you, after all that you say yourself in your letter to him? Upon what will your trust be based? And if you have none, how will you work with him? How do you know that, even if Nechayev accepts your conditions and goes as far as to put his acceptance in writing (using his real name or some invented one)—[how do you know] that he will not secretly be tricking you precisely as he has been doing ever since you have known each other? For myself that would be absolutely impossible. Although he never hypnotised me, as you seem to think, he did something worse. He poisoned and paralysed me by developing in me a mistrust so great that it will be a long time before I manage to rid myself of it.

Now I cannot and do not wish to participate in any Russian affairs whatsoever. Call me a sceptic, Mikhail Alexandrovich—perhaps you are right. [But] on this occasion my scepticism has saved me from God knows what toils and troubles.

Do you really want your letter to N[echayev] to be kept a secret? Will you let me read just a few extracts to two or three people who still believe that you and N[echayev] are synonymous? It seems to me that this could only do you good, and not harm. Kindly let me know what you think of the idea. . . .

I press your hand
N. HERZEN

Michael Bakunin to Natalie Herzen

28 JUNE 1870 [*Saint-Maurice*]

NATALYA ALEXANDROVNA,

Serebrennikov, with whom I spent the entire evening, is asleep, and before following his example I want to say a few words to you. From what Serebrennikov has told me I am convinced that you are terribly incensed by Barsov [Nechayev], whom you considered until recently the finest of all of us. I know little of your personal relationship with him, but let us assume even that he has offended you personally in some way. That still does not give you the right to betray us. Remember the day when in the presence of all of us you gave him and us your hand in the common cause. Since that time you have been entrusted with many confidences and have come to know certain people who belong to our camp, our cause. However great and even legitimate your anger with Barsov may now be, you have not the right now to break your word. It would be treachery against your conscience and your honour. I cannot write to you in detail at present, but I implore you not to say or do anything that might damage Barsov and the work he is accomplishing, perhaps not always in the correct manner, but always with boundless dedication and self-forgetfulness. Whatever his errors, he remains nevertheless, in my opinion and I hope in yours, the finest and, where the cause is concerned though not where people are concerned, the most honourable of us all.

Tomorrow I shall send you a detailed letter through Serebrennikov. And now I beg you once more, do not commit a crime against your conscience and honour. . . .

Sergey Nechayev to Bakunin and Ogarev

[END OF JULY 1870]

WHY, WHEN WE PARTED and you kissed me like Judases, did you not tell me you were going to write to your acquaintances? Your last letter to Talandier, and the warning to Guillaume about the danger of participating in a cause of which you have always been the theoretical instigators, are acts of the most dishonourable and despicable kind, committed out of petty spite. With total disregard of common sense and the interests of the cause you are bent on wallowing in the mire—well, then, wallow!

Farewell

Michael Bakunin to Natalie Herzen

2 AUGUST 1870 *Locarno*

DEAR TATA,

I was very sad myself to have left Geneva without seeing you and saying farewell. But what was I to do? I could not overcome the revulsion aroused in me by the very thought of your old friend and namesake—and, most of all, I was in a hurry: poor Antonia summoned me, she was completely alone, and I rushed to her assistance. And so I had to leave without bidding you farewell.

Here is Semen Serebrennikov's address for you. . . . I am extremely anxious about him. I wrote to him the day after my return here, and I still have not had any reply. I know that he and an old friend, whom he was to have met in Zurich, were going to go on a trip to the mountains, and look what I discovered in the day-before-yesterday's *Bund*: "A young Russian student of the Zurich Polytechnical School fell into a gorge while climbing Mount Pilatus near Lucerne and suffered injuries which proved fatal." I at once wrote to Zurich to ascertain the whereabouts of Serebrennikov. I hope he was not the victim of this unfortunate accident. That would be a great misfortune. I have rarely encountered a Russian youth more likeable and more deserving of respect and trust than he is. If you know anything of him, I beg you to write to me.

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You ask me if I have heard anything of our amiable "Baron" (Nechayev) and his comrades. I am sending a note of his to Ogarev by this very post; I received it yesterday evening. Read it and keep it as a document, numbered along with the other documents. You are our archivist, after all! Give it to Ozerov and Zhukovsky to read, but on condition that they say nothing of it.

How do you like the note? Our fanatic, with his more or less sincere monomania, surpasses even Robert Macaire, and I am beginning to doubt the sincerity even of his mania. And all we, and myself most of all, can do is to sprinkle ashes upon our heads and cry out in our grief: we have been utter fools! We have learned our lesson for the future. It is a shame that old age is approaching and we have few years left in which to profit by the lesson. I have asked Mroczkowski, to whom he has introduced himself, to give me as detailed information as he can concerning his address, his new contacts, and all his latest tricks. I will let you know what I learn.

Would it be indiscreet of me to trouble you with the following request? News of military operations reaches you immediately by telegraph, and us only two days later. Every time something important happens, say, for example, the French invade Germany and give the Germans a thrashing, or the Germans invade France and the French get a thrashing, or the French fleet routs the Prussian and lands on the German beaches, or if any other power—Russia, Austria, Denmark, Italy, or England enters the war—in a word, if anything major occurs in any respect whatsoever, telegraph me at the following address: Locarno, Signora Teresa Pedrazzini, and make it as precise and detailed as possible. If you do this I shall be extremely grateful to you.

Farewell, I press your hand

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

2 OCTOBER 1870 — *Campagne Baumgartner St Jean [la Tour] Genève*

UPON HIS DEPARTURE Bakunin left me the original of his will, Masha my dear, and asked me to send it on to you—you know what to do with it.

You must have heard how he incited the people of Lyons to revolt and how he (that is, he and half a dozen ultra-radicals) succeeded in gaining control of the Hotel de Ville for seven hours! But their jubilation was premature—the people grew distrustful and began saying that God-knows-who-they-were, they might be "Prussian spies." In the present situation that was no joke. and they were obliged to make a speedy escape, They say Bakunin is in Marseilles now and wants to do a *repeat performance*. But the question is, what good will come of it? Every day gives one cause to wonder at the ignorance and indifference of the French. . . .

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

8 OCTOBER 1870 — *Genève*

NECHAYEV and Compagnie have distinguished themselves by publishing an issue of the journal *Obshchina* [*The Commune*] in which they demand money from Ogarev and Bakunin, and want them to send it via *myself* since I am *in charge of their funds*. It is nothing but a charming little joke, a way of taking their vengeance on me for my having seen through them and recoiled in horror. Perhaps it will pass unnoticed in Russia, and I hope no one will believe it. People know what masterly liars they are. I embrace you all and kiss you warmly. Write sometime to

your TATA

I have Papasha's letters under lock and key.

Michael Bakunin to Nikolay Ogarev

2 NOVEMBER 1872 — *Locarno*

SO THEN, my old friend, the unheard-of has come to pass. The Republic has delivered up the wretched Nechayev. What is saddest of all is that our government will doubtless resume the Nechayev trial and there will be new victims. Some kind of inner voice, though, tells me that Nechayev, who is irretrievably lost and certainly knows he is lost, will summon up on this occasion from the depths of his confused, sullied, but far from despicable being, all his primordial energy and prowess. He will perish a hero, and this time will betray nothing and no one. Such is my belief. We shall soon see if I am right.

I don't know about you, but I feel dreadfully sorry for him. No one has done me, and deliberately done me, so much harm as he, but still I feel sorry for him. He was a man of rare energy, and when you and I met him he was ablaze with a bright flame of love for our poor, oppressed people, was suffering real anguish at the historical misfortunes of our people. Then his slovenliness was still only outward; inwardly he was not dirty. His [love of] playing the general and the petty tyrant, and his methods of so-called Machiavellism and Jesuitism finally, thanks to his ignorance, plunged him wretchedly into the mire. Towards the end he became an utter fool.

Imagine, as early as two or three weeks before his arrest, we warned him through some aquaintances—not directly, because neither I nor any of my friends wished to meet him—to get out of Zurich as quickly as he could and that the police were looking for him. He wouldn't believe us, and said: "It's the Bakuninites trying to drive me away from Zurich," adding: "Things

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are different now from what they were in 1870—now I've got my own people, friends in the Federal Council in Berne—they would warn me if I was threatened by such a danger." Well, he's had it now.

Now, my old friend, I have a request to make of you. You know that Marx, Utin and their company of German Yids have set in motion the most ferocious, slanderous campaign against me. I have to prove that I am not a thief. Therefore I am sending you a draft statement which I would like you to sign. Because you are a classicist, a stylist, you may disapprove of my turn of phrase. I do not defend it, alter it as much as you like, in accordance with your fastidious taste. But I doubt if you will want or find it necessary to alter any of the actual content of the statement I am furnishing you with—because that content, as you know yourself, is in strict conformity with the purest truth—and truth may not be altered. . . .

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

17 APRIL 1871 *Genève*

I read in the papers here that amongst the insurgents taken prisoner by the Versaillais are the Reclus brothers, our good friends, and exceedingly noble, honourable, and cultured persons. Elisée Reclus is considerably well known for his scholarly works. The fact that they took part in the uprising reinforces my faith in the Paris movement and makes me wonder yet again if the Versaillais are not deliberately exaggerating the *horrific stories* that are being told about the Paris Terror. The Reclus brothers are by no means *ultra-rouge*. They know Bakunin but are not in sympathy with his *actions*. Surely they are not going to shoot them too?

Man is indeed the most brutal and vicious of beasts.

We shall almost certainly see each other again before our journey to Russia but meanwhile I embrace and kiss you from the bottom of my heart, dear kind Masha. Nathalie and Liza send you all "flirtatious glances".

TATA H[ERZEN]

18 APRIL

We seem to have only one volume of *Dead Souls*, which I am sending you; Sasha will send you the other.

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

9 JULY 1871 *Genève*

YES, SOMEHOW we have not written to each other for a very long time, Masha dear, probably because our personal lives have been jogging along their usual course, just like old times, and then, too, there have been such dreadful happenings as to make one's hair stand on end, in public life, that is.

In my opinion it was preposterous of the "Commune" to destroy the Tuileries, and as for the other horrors of which there has been so much scandalous talk, one should not form a hasty judgment. God knows what tales people are telling about this wretched "Commune". I am personally acquainted with several of its members and know that they would never permit any *excès*. Everything people are saying about *petroleuses* and *petroleurs* is pure invention too; they destroyed the houses which prevented them from defending themselves. But all the *anti-socialists* and bourgeois find it profitable to blacken the movement and try to prove that the members of the "Commune" are nothing better than a gang of robbers and *échappés de bagne*, and it appears that your Sasha too is disposed to regard them in the same light, is he not?

But what makes one's hair stand on end is the conduct of the Versaillais now. We know for a certainty here that they are mercilessly shooting men, women and even *children*—this I know from the tales of *eye-witnesses*. And then their official journal (of the Versaillais, that is) announces that: "such-and-such a man or woman has been executed"—while I know *for sure* that those people are alive and well and have managed to flee. So what does that prove?—that they have been executing *innocent people* in their places. . . .

Sasha and I want to hold a family "consultation". At first we all hoped still that we should be allowed into Russia, in spite of the refusal. But after the Paris Commune business it is out of the question. There will be a period of reaction in Russia too; everyone is telling us so, even those who believed most strongly in the possibility of our returning. Yesterday we received the Russian papers with a complete account of the Nechayev trial. Knowing how interested you are in it, I will send it to you as soon as everyone here has read it. He is a crafty fellow indeed, and played an important part in the murder of Ivanov, as you will see. . . .

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

UNDATED *Genève*

Be *very* cautious with all the Russians who have recently arrived. Remember, a new type of man *à la* Nechayev is forming among them, a kind of *revolutionary Jesuit* who is ready to commit any vileness in order to achieve his goal, *i.e.* revolution in Russia. To this end, and in the most shameless fashion, he feels free to *lie*, to read other people's letters, to steal documents, keys, etc. In Russia they force people to make donations of enormous sums by *threatening* to denounce them to the Third Section. Those are *facts*, Masha. It is simply outrageous.

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Natalie Herzen to Nikolay Ogarev

14 MAY 1877 *Paris*

THIS TIME I am guilty of being late with the money; forgive me, Aga my dear. . . .

Yesterday evening I was at Turgenev's—no, the day before. He had fixed that day for his departure, but suddenly fell ill with gout, and is lying in bed with it even now, poor man. But he is still amazingly handsome and attractive in spite of it.

Of course I followed the trial of the people accused of social-revolutionary propaganda, but nevertheless I would very much like to read the pamphlet you mentioned, published, I think, under the editorship of *Vpered* [Forward]—please send it, don't forget. How sorry I feel for all these young people! So much self-sacrifice, so much strength expended to no purpose! One cannot but admire their courage, especially that of the women, but at the same time I have to admit that they act like madmen and their aim is beyond my comprehension.

Natalie Herzen to Maria Reichel

13 MAY 1879 *Paris*

MY DEAR MASHA,

Rumours are going around here that a certain girl student tried to poison herself in Berne, but was saved, and people are collecting money to pay her debts and make it possible for her to return to Russia. Do you know her, or know of the story? After hearing of all that is happening in Russia I am absolutely at a loss to know whom to believe. If a wretched woman comes along, a compatriot of mine, and says that she is starving to death, how am I to know that the money I give her will not be spent on some silly and ultra-pernicious leaflet instead of on food? Leo Berline has already written to Meshchersky about this student, but I should like to hear from *you* if you are personally acquainted with her and if she is worthy of our interest. I want to be *certain* that the money (assuming that we manage to collect any) will not be used for some political folly, and on that score I still have my doubts. . . .

Natalie Herzen, Reminiscences

[1870s]

SOON AFTER LUNCH the maid came to say that some gentleman wished to speak with me. I went to the drawing-room, where I found a young man, tall and thickset, with a small, blonde moustache, and wearing spectacles. His face was somehow familiar, but I could not remember his name.

"You probably do not recognise me," he said, making his bow. "I am German Lopatin, I used to visit your father in London."

"I remember you well," I interrupted him. "I saw you at my father's in London."

"I am a great admirer of your father, and that is why I have taken the liberty of presenting myself to you and asking you to give me your attention for a few minutes. It is a very serious matter, and I must speak with you alone. Here in the drawing-room we might be interrupted."

I led him into my room and said that I was ready to listen to him. He came to the point immediately: "You know there is to be a meeting this evening of Russian youth and *émigrés* to discuss the Nechayev business? Do you intend to go to it?"

"Yes, I have just now promised to do so."

He leapt up in great agitation and said: "No, no, it's impossible. The daughter of Alexander Ivanovich Herzen must not lend her presence to such a gathering."

Struck by the force and animation of his speech, I said: "But why? What are you talking about?"

"Do you know who Nechayev is? Do you know what role he played in the affair of Ivanov?"

"No," I replied, greatly surprised. . . . Upon which he related to me the tragedy of that unfortunate student, a tragedy in which Nechayev had played the chief role. It had been he who had lured Ivanov into an ambush, and then finished him off after a terrible struggle.

"Have you noticed the scars on his thumb?"

"Yes, I have seen them and even asked what they were, what they meant."

"He could not answer you, because they were the traces of the bites his wretched victim inflicted upon him. Do you understand—you must not go to this meeting! The idea of your participation would be unendurable to those who love and honour the memory of your father. They must do all they can to keep you from going."

I was overwhelmed and dispirited by this revelation. I could only express my gratitude to Lopatin for his intervention. His entire being was inspired with sentiments of sincerity and justice, and I did not doubt the truth of his story for a moment.

Lopatin rose and said, as he pressed my hand: "So you will not be going to the meeting? Can I be sure of it?"

"Yes," I replied, and thanked him once again. He took his leave. From that moment I always regarded Lopatin as my saviour, and always said as much when telling of those events.

I only saw Lopatin once more, about twelve years afterwards, at a Russian party in the *Salle des Mille Colonnes* in Paris. I recognised him immediately in spite of his large white beard.

Nechayev I never saw again, and, of course, had no further dealings with him.

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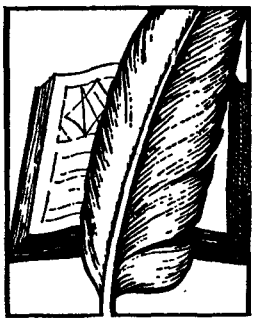

Column

I DON'T SUPPOSE that, to most people, the name of Harry Dexter White means very much any more. Yet in his time he was, in his own way, one of the most important men in the Western world, and he left a lasting mark upon it in the shape of the Bretton Woods agreement, and the two sister institutions to which it gave birth, the International Monetary Fund, and the Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

In his excellent book, *Harry Dexter White, a Study in Paradox*,[1] Mr David Rees has now unravelled the complicated strands of White's career, and with great skill, and meticulous scholarship, has reduced to order an enormous mass of material relating to it. I would like to say at once that his book is a very remarkable achievement, most of all perhaps because of the way in which it illuminates a subject which for most people is shrouded in the deepest mystery.

For White, after all, dealt in a commodity which everybody uses but, as we know to our cost, very few people understand; that is to say, Money. Moreover he dealt in it in the rarefied form in which it enters into international finance, which, as we are beginning to learn, has the power, if wisely conducted, of helping to make the world go round, but also, if mishandled, of bringing it almost to a standstill.

The path by which White achieved a share of this power is in itself an interesting and a highly unlikely one. It is a kind of paradigm of the ways in which, between the Wars, able and intelligent young Americans could rise, not so much from rags to riches, as from anonymity to a role on the stage of world politics. The son of Lithuanian immigrants, Harry White (no one knows when or why he adopted the second name of Dexter) was born on the wrong side of the tracks in Boston in 1892, enlisted and was commissioned in the United States Army in 1917 and after the first World War, until 1922, worked in his family's hardware store, while at the same time interesting himself in various projects aimed at alleviating the conditions of the Boston poor.

So far, there was nothing to indicate that life had anything more in store for him than for millions of other unknown and obscure American citizens. In 1922, however, he suddenly enrolled himself as a student at Columbia University, New York, in 1924 transferred, across the continent, to Stanford, California and, having graduated, studied and taught economics at Harvard while taking his Ph.D. under the supervision of the eminent and influential Professor Frank W. Taussig. White's career as a student and teacher at Harvard was a distinguished one and left no doubts of his competence and ability as an economist; but he did not quite make the grade of becoming a member of the faculty, and in 1932, in a mood of frustration and disappointment, he accepted a rather dim post as Assistant Professor of Economics at Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin (now the University of Wisconsin). He was then aged 40, and one might have said that he was an underprivileged American who had made good, but not so good that many others had not done much better.

WHAT GAVE HIM his opportunity was the New Deal. In 1934 he joined the flood of ambitious and idealistic Americans who thronged to Washington to enter the government service, in White's case, the United States Treasury. He rose rapidly in the service, and by 1941 had become an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, with responsibility, under Roosevelt's famous Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., for all the Treasury's overseas operations, and later for American post-War financial policy. In 1944, he became, with Maynard Keynes, the joint architect of the Bretton Woods agreement, which was the keystone of that policy, and in 1946 American representative on the board of directors of the International Monetary Fund; it was intended, and assumed, that he should become the first managing director of the Fund. In 1947, however, he suddenly resigned, to become "a sort of financial consultant in New York", and two years later died of a heart attack.

Mr Rees introduces one of his chapters with a quotation from Henry Adams' life of Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury under Jefferson and Madison.

> "In governments as in households, the purse holds the power. The Treasury is the natural point of control to be occupied by any statesmen who aims at organisation or reform."

Perhaps Adams was only saying what Keynes said more succinctly to Lytton Strachey: "It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of money." But it is not only the statesman, or the politician, who seeks to occupy "the point of control"; it is also a natural target for the ambitions of those who aim at real and effective power without shouldering the burdens and responsibilities of the political process.

[1] Macmillan, £5.95

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WHITE BELONGED BY NATURE and temperament to that class of bureaucrat which unites great professional competence with the ambition to leave the world a different place from what it would have been without their effort and exertions. Such men are dangerous, even though they may have their uses. But judged by his own standards White was quite remarkably, even brilliantly, successful. The world is not what it would have been without the Bretton Woods agreement, the IMF and the World Bank; equally, there is no doubt that in his efforts to launch these institutions, in the form which he thought appropriate to the world's post-War needs, White was inspired by something more than merely personal ambition.

His public record therefore is a spectacular success story. But alas! just at the moment when his career was reaching its height, a dark shadow fell across it, so that his sudden death was perhaps fortunate for him. For the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury was, it would seem, a Soviet agent.

At least, that is Mr Rees' tentative conclusion after a scrupulously fair examination of the available evidence against White. Others have been more positive than Mr Rees. In 1953, in a speech in Chicago, the United States Attorney-General, Herbert Brownell, said bluntly: "Harry Dexter White was a Russian spy. He smuggled secret documents to Russian agents for transmission to Moscow." J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the F.B.I., stated that the case against White was based on "facts of an uncontradictable nature", and President Eisenhower said that the evidence against him was "incontrovertible." Of course, both Mr Brownell's and President Eisenhower's accusations against a dead man are tainted by political motivation; they come from members of an administration which (in President Truman's words), had "fully embraced, for political advantage, McCarthyism." Mr Hoover's "facts of an uncontradictable nature" are known only to the F.B.I., and those to whom he revealed them, including presumably President Eisenhower and Mr Brownell, but not, unfortunately, to Mr Rees, who has not had access to the classified information relating to White.

In default of this, he has had to rely on the public record which is admittedly incomplete and inconclusive. The evidence against White, in fact, rests almost entirely on the testimony of two suspect and rather unreliable witnesses, Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers, both Communist defectors and both capable of inaccuracies, inconsistencies and demonstrable lies which make it necessary to take anything they say with a whole handful of salt. Nor are their stories supported by any material evidence. In White's case, there is no Woodstock typewriter (which played so fatal a part in the conviction of Alger Hiss), and the only documentary evidence against White consists of a single memorandum in his handwriting which Chambers claimed to have been among the famous, or notorious, Pumpkin Papers which he secreted with such prescience in his brother-in-law's water-closet. But there is no evidence, except Chambers' word, of how it came into his possession, or of whether in fact it was contained in the sealed envelope which he originally hid. We must also remember that, unlike Alger Hiss, White never had the opportunity of defending himself, or of challenging his accusers, in a court of law.

Nevertheless, Mr Rees concludes that, for all their weaknesses, Miss Bentley's and Chambers' testimonies, given independently and at a long interval in time, corroborate each other to an extent which is almost impossible to explain except on the hypothesis that White was guilty. His final verdict is one of "Non-Proven", but with the rider that, on the balance of probabilities, Attorney-General Brownell was telling the truth when he said that Harry Dexter White had served in Russian espionage.

WHAT DOES ONE MAKE of this extraordinary story, or rather these two parallel stories, with hardly a connecting link except White himself? One derives from the highest levels of the American establishment and the other from the shabby underground of Soviet espionage and subversion. It would be unfair to Mr Rees if one gave the impression that both play an equally important part in his book, which is much less a spy story than a detailed examination of the part played by the U.S. Treasury in the wartime and post-War foreign policy of the United States; this was of course the particular sphere in which White exercised a predominant influence.

For if White was a spy, he was a very rare variety of spy. There is nothing very interesting about most spies, and they would not attract much public interest, except for the fact that they are spies. White was exceptional because he was in his public capacity in charge of interesting and important matters which would have given him a place in history even if he had never been accused of espionage.

Mr Rees identifies six particular areas in which White used his position in the Treasury to promote what were essentially political ends. One, of course, was the Bretton Woods agreement, in which White, as opposed to Keynes, fought for an "active" role for the International Monetary Fund which would make it substantially an

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instrument of United States policy. Mr Rees gives a fascinating account of the atmosphere in which the negotiations were conducted. Though stormy, and though White was "profoundly jealous" of Keynes, the conference was more like an academic seminar than a political proceeding, and White proved himself fully capable of taking on so formidable an antagonist as Keynes. One likes the picture of the two men sitting at the head of the conference table, surrounded by experts, with Keynes saying: "Well, Harry, what shall it be today, passivity, exchange stabilisation, or the role of gold? . . ."

Then there were White's efforts to initiate a more positive American policy in South America and particularly Cuba, and his determined attempt, up to the very moment of Pearl Harbour, to achieve an understanding with Japan. There was what one might call, if one were writing a spy story, the Affair of the Chinese Gold, in which White successfully delayed the transfer of gold to Nationalist China (under a 500-million-dollar credit granted by the United States) as a means of combating the raging inflation which, in the end, contributed largely to the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek. There was the Case of the Allied Military Currency, in which White insisted on the delivery to the Soviet Union of duplicate plates for printing the Allied military currency to be used in Occupied Germany. This was a decision which, in the end, had the effect that, while the Western Allies printed some $20 million AM marks for use in their zones (with an exchange rate of 1–10 against the mark), the Russians printed some $81 billion AM marks with a purely nominal exchange rate. And, lastly, there was White's campaign to secure the adoption by the Allies of the famous "Morgenthau Plan" for the pastoralisation of Germany, which would have involved the partition of Germany, the final and total destruction or removal of all her industrial capital, and a reduction in her population of something up to 30 million people.

In all these initiatives White revealed himself as a rough, tough operator, abrasive in argument and ruthless in pursuit of his objectives. He believed in "all-out" methods of negotiation which involved, as in military strategy, "the fullest possible use of every economic and political advantage." He regarded money (in the words of the Secretary of the Treasury's annual report for 1944–45) as "an important offensive and defensive weapon of war", and he used it as such. There is, however, a curious contrast between the ruthless servant of the Treasury and the Soviet spy described by Bentley and Chanbers. According to them, in his espionage activities White was nervous and timorous, afraid of going too far and reluctant to make any total commitment to Communism. It hardly seems as if it could be the same man who was in question, and this only increases one's doubts about the credibility of the charges against White.

THE QUESTION ARISES, of course, whether in White's activities at the Treasury one can detect some pattern which is consistent with, and corroborates, the charge that he was a Communist spy. For if he was indeed a Russian agent, he was of far greater importance to the Soviet Union as a direct influence on policy than as an intelligence source. And in some ways, indeed, one can quite reasonably make out such a pattern. His desperate efforts to reach an understanding with Japan can be interpreted as an attempt to secure Russia's eastern flank in Asia; the Affair of the Chinese Gold as a direct contribution to the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek by the Communists; the Case of the Allied Military Currency as a means to completing the ruin of the German economy and to advancing Soviet interests in Europe; the Morgenthau plan as a final destruction of Germany as a rival to Soviet power.

It is, however, just as or perhaps more probable that White, in exercising the power of the Treasury, was dominated by the belief (which was in fact shared by the administration as a whole) that the affairs of the post-War world would continue to be directed by the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union which had provided the foundation for victory in war. One cannot help being struck, in reading Mr Rees' book, by the generally shared assumption in the American government that the power vacuum created in Europe by the defeat and destruction of Germany would naturally and inevitably be filled by the Soviet Union. On this assumption, all of White's vigorously prosecuted diplomatic and financial initiatives could be reconciled with the official objectives of the United States government.

Thus the public career, like the alleged underground activities, of Harry Dexter White presents us with a mystery. Mr Rees does not pretend to have solved it, but he has done something rather better. In assembling and analysing the available evidence against White, he has presented us with an unusually lucid and penetrating view of the machinery and operations of the United States Government at a crucial period in history. He ends his book by saying of his hero/villain *Requiescat,* but refrains from adding *in pace,* no doubt rightly, because, as his own book demonstrates, it still remains difficult to lay the uneasy ghost of Harry Dexter White.

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AMERICAN CHRONICLE

The Presidency

The Impossible Job

By Max Beloff

IF PRESIDENT NIXON has done nothing else he has made the future of the Presidency of the United States a living issue not only for his own countrymen but for the world at large. With the outcome of Watergate still uncertain, and with neither impeachment nor resignation ruled out, an assessment of the impact that President Nixon himself will have made cannot yet be undertaken. But the problem would have been there in any event. Indeed of the two recent and in their differing ways important studies of the Presidential office, that by Mr Emmet John Hughes went to press before Watergate broke, and that by Professor Arthur Schlesinger (while taking Watergate into account) would probably not have reached very different conclusions if it had never happened.[1]

The books are as different as the individual experiences of the authors might lead one to expect. Mr Hughes was a professional journalist of great experience who spent some time in the White House as a speech-writer for President Eisenhower. Professor Schlesinger came out of academe, the historian son of an eminent historian, to serve on Kennedy's White House staff. Both have written distinguished works on the Presidents they served; both now tackle the more general theme of the role of the office itself, and both write from the middle ground of American politics. But there the resemblances end. Mr Hughes is more analytical in his treatment and more rhetorical in style; Professor Schlesinger is more at home in narrative—the historical training comes through—has a less ornate and more effective manner of writing, and is obviously more concerned about the strains to which the American political system is being subjected and their consequences for the nation and the world. In a curious way the journalist and the historian seem to have exchanged their roles. Mr Hughes's book could have been written at any juncture since the Roosevelt Presidency which both writers rightly see as the crucial era of change in Washington; Professor Schlesinger's book, for all the load of learning it carries, is a tract for the times, and not only because of Viet Nam and Watergate.

THE DIFFERENCE CAN be seen in what is a major aspect of the whole subject when viewed historically. As every American schoolboy knows—or did know until history gave way to the modern fad for subjects of so-called contemporary relevance—American history has seen an alternation between periods in which the Presidency has been strong and self-aggrandising, and those in which it has been weak and in which Congress has been at its most self-assertive. For Mr Hughes this phenomenon is so built into the Constitution and its ambiguities that it can almost be regarded as a cyclic one:

> "A lasting mark of the political life of the Republic has been its constantly cyclical rhythm. For spans of sometimes a dozen years, sometimes nearly a score of years, these cycles have witnessed either a Presidential-progressive ascendancy or a Congressional-conservative ascendancy. The times of innovation have alternated with the times of consolidation, as the temper of the nation has variously called for a surge of change or a pause for rest."

If this be the case then whatever difficulties may arise from a too great accumulation of Presidential power—and Viet Nam is as central to Mr Hughes's argument as it is to Professor Schlesinger's—no great measures of reform are called for; since a reconstruction of Presidential powers, possibly "apt for one such cycle", would be alien to the other kind of situation.

Certainly it does not follow that an overweening exercise of Presidential authority, even when fortified by policies of concealment and prevarication (particularly in foreign and military affairs), should lead to a reassertion of some broad Congressional power. The history of the Republic "provides no convincing reason to expect Congressional judgment to be superior, in prudence or foresight, to the President's judgment on the nation's role in the world." So we get from Mr Hughes only some very minor suggestions for change. Most of them rely on Presidential self-restraint in what in British parlance would be a new set of conventions of constitutional behaviour; though with some prescience (writing pre-Watergate), Mr Hughes thought that the Supreme

[1] *The Living Presidency*. By EMMET JOHN HUGHES. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, $10.50. *The Imperial Presidency*. By ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER jun. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, $10.

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Court might have to be called in to define the extent of "executive privilege."

The most positive proposal is that Congress should be given some clear control over any military forces raised by conscription. The President's ability to engage in military operations would thus be restricted to his use of the forces in being.[2] At a time when the movement in the recruitment of armies is towards wholly professional forces this proposal would hardly seem to be a very significant one. Nor indeed is it easy to see how any such distinction could be drawn between different types of forces without introducing an unacceptable rigidity into the country's military posture.

PROFESSOR SCHLESINGER sees the cycle as less controlled. What he fears is that Viet Nam, Watergate, and other instances of Presidential misbehaviour (in particular the use of "impoundment," *i.e.* the failure to spend money duly voted by Congress as a method of thwarting the will of the legislature) may lead to a reaction of such a scale as to jeopardise the whole system. He sees, for instance, the pressure from Congress for a total abandonment of executive privilege reaching a pitch at which a new Joe McCarthy would find no obstacles in the way of hounding government servants. And some proposed measures against impoundment would also make for confusion in government:

> The revolutionary Presidency had tried to abolish the congressional power of the purse and make spending a matter of executive decree. The congressional reaction was to stop the President by measures that introduced rigidity into a political process that had always prospered by flexibility.

Professor Schlesinger's alarm both at the way in which Presidents Johnson and Nixon have extended the powers of the Presidency, and at the solutions offered by Congress, is perhaps made more acute by his own feelings of guilt at having taken some part in making the former process possible. This, however, does not refer to his service to President Kennedy but to his own historical writings. He is not likely to forget, or to be allowed to forget, that he made his name with a book on Andrew Jackson which stressed the positive aspects of the role of the Presidency—the "President as Tribune"—and which was much influenced by a need to link the Rooseveltian "New Deal" with some acceptable part of the American historical canon. Nor, of course, has admiration for Presidential leadership been lacking in his writings on the Roosevelt period itself. Indeed, if one believes in the "party of movement" rather than the "party of order" (to use terms from another political culture) one cannot really want the President to be weak. To some extent Professor Schlesinger gets over the difficulty by focusing on foreign and military questions:

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT *(1934)*

> "Few Presidents had so much rejoiced in the exercise of power as Franklin D. Roosevelt but even FDR had preferred, when possible, to act in concert and partnership with Congress. The Presidential breakaway really came after the Second World War. The post-war Presidents, though Eisenhower and Kennedy markedly less so than Truman, Johnson and Nixon, almost came to see the sharing of power with Congress in foreign policy as a derogation of the Presidency. Congress, in increasing self-abasement, almost came to love its impotence. The image of the President acting by himself in foreign affairs, imposing his own sense of reality and necessity on a waiting government and people almost became the new orthodoxy."

One aspect of this fact which Professor Schlesinger rightly emphasises is how little use Roosevelt made of the powers allegedly inhering in the President as Commander-in-Chief.[3]

[2] The proposal does not originate with Mr Hughes but is taken from a discussion of Presidential power by former Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas who is one of the dozen former Presidential aides who have contributed brief essays to form an appendix to Mr Hughes's book. Mr Fortas seems to have got the idea from Justice William O. Douglas. There is something to be said for keeping the robe and the sword apart.

[3] Professor Schlesinger takes the view that the intention of the Founding Fathers in making the President Commander-in-Chief was to subject the military establishment to civilian control. His case for this rather tortuous view is not strengthened by saying that "the Founders doubtless hoped to spare America tribulations of the sort that the unfettered command and consequent political power of a Duke of Marlborough had brought to England."

On the contrary, Marlborough's command depended entirely on support from politicians at home; and his downfall was due to a change in party control. The President's role was here, as elsewhere, modelled on that of the monarch.

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What Professor Schlesinger is looking for is a President able to give a lead in domestic reform but unable to lead the country into dangerous courses abroad because of the need to carry Congress with him on all major points.[4] And he wishes to do this within the framework laid down by the Founding Fathers.

FOR, IF MORE ALARMED than Mr Hughes, Professor Schlesinger is no less determined that the work of the Constitution-makers should stand unrevised. Ideas of refashioning the Constitution on British lines, of a plural Executive on the Swiss model, or of a six year single-term Presidency are all dismissed. What excites particular disapprobation is the suspicion that what President Nixon may have had in mind was the French model—the constitutional ideas of a Louis Napoleon or a de Gaulle:

> "A plebiscitary Presidency, unlike a Parliamentary régime, would not require a new Constitution; presidential acts confirmed by a Supreme Court of his own appointment, could put a new gloss on an old one. And a plebiscitary Presidency could be seen as the fulfilment of constitutional democracy."

IT WILL ALWAYS remain a mystery to non-Americans why Americans should be so excessively conservative in constitutional matters. Certainly the Founding Fathers were a most remarkable body of men and the system of government they constructed served the country very well for all its formative period. But they were men, after all, not demigods. Why should they have been thought capable of peering into an unknowable future? We do not accept the physics of the 18th century as the last word on the subject—why accept its politics? Nor, of course, does Professor Schlesinger in fact. Like others who rely on the work of the Founding Fathers he retains the right to make his own additions to it.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN *(1861)*

And his acceptable gloss is the admissability—indeed the desirability—of political parties, which they had hoped the infant Republic might avoid.

For Professor Schlesinger, the historian of Jackson and of FDR, party must bulk large. It has for much of American history, as he rightly points out, been "the ultimate vehicle of political expression." Now party loyalties decay. Party loyalties have never been so weak, party organisations so irrelevant. The welfare state has made the old party machines irrelevant; the electronic media have made it possible for voters to know politicians, and (more important) when combined with computerised public opinion polls for the politicians to know the voters.

In this way, it is easier for a President to think of himself as the sole interpreter of the national will and to act accordingly. Since, however, no one man can deal with all the multifarious aspects of a huge modern country, the President is bound to institutionalise himself; hence the growth of the Executive Office and within it of the White House staff. After all, the main lesson of Watergate has been how impossible it is to separate man and office. No one can know, as we could know of Presidents from Washington to FDR, what was the actual role of the man who was President. And, in a democracy above all, such uncertainty is dangerous.

ONE CAN, OF COURSE, TAKE a fairly simple view and suggest that the decline of party has had among other effects that of demoting cabinet members who need no longer be chosen because of their own political weight and whose departments are demoted along with them. Indeed, Mr Hughes makes the restoration of the Secretary of State (and of the State Department) to a major role in foreign policy one of his principal proposals. But the two do not necessarily hang together. Since he wrote, Dr Henry Kissinger has been made Secretary of State without abandoning his more intimate White House role. There has been nothing yet to indicate that the State Department has had a corresponding growth in stature.

[4] It is interesting (and may for some people be disquieting) to find Professor Schlesinger more than once using the United States commitment to Israel (and this before the Yom Kippur War) as an example of an illegitimate use of Executive power. This fact was in his view responsible for what he describes as unwarranted interference by the Israeli Embassy in the 1972 election campaign.

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Professor Schlesinger would like to go further. He wants to see the President powerfully supported in running the government by departmental heads of a calibre more common in earlier times. But he also wants to see the Executive branch as a whole work in harmony with Congress but without any consitutional change which could force this to come about. Even a revived party system would hardly do when the control of Congress is so often in the hands of the party that does not control the Presidency.

IF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES are ruled out, one can only trust to goodwill. Professor Schlesinger's willingness to do so seems to have been unaffected by proofs of its absence. In arguments over Executive privilege,

> "the proper answer would lie in Andrew Jackson's assertion of the right to defend the executive against congressional harassment; and the definition of harassment, though made initially by the President, would be sustained or rejected by the reaction of responsible members of Congress and of national opinion. The answer lay, in short, not in absolute privilege but in constitutional comity."

The same would apply to arguments about the commitment of military forces overseas:

> "Like so many aspects of the relationship between Congress and the Presidency, the question of over seas deployments had been resolved through most of American history by comity."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT *(1904)*

The difficulty about "comity" is that where it exists you do not need to worry about it; where it does not, it is hard to see how it can be provided. Like Mr Hughes, Professor Schlesinger is not reluctant to try legislative methods: "All that was necessary," he writes, with Viet Nam in mind, "was a statute with two main elements: an obligation laid upon the President to report at once to Congress, with full information and justification, whenever he sent troops into battle and to keep on reporting so long as hostilities continued; and a declaration by Congress of its right at any point to terminate such military action by concurrent resolution."

But while the course of events in Viet Nam might conceivably have been affected had such legislation been in effect, one has only to think of other crises in the recent past and of some possible future scenarios to see how difficult it is to legislate for an area in which no government, not even that of a super-Power, can act regardless of the reactions of friend and foe. Nor can collisions of purpose between Executive and Legislature easily await resolution in an election, which may be three years off and decided for quite different reasons.

WHAT NEITHER Professor Schlesinger nor Mr Hughes can bring themselves to say is that the American Presidency is not merely a very difficult job; it is an impossible one, and that tragedy in one form or another is the likely lot not only of its incumbents but of many who aspire to it. A wise parent would probably prefer that his offspring stayed in the log cabin. No one who read either of these books seriously—and here Mr Hughes is perhaps the better guide as to what is entailed by the job—could seriously doubt this conclusion. To explain it would need a book as long as either of these. Perhaps three points might be set down quite baldly.

In the first place, while America is not to be blamed for its weight in the world, it does need a political leadership that will make plain both the responsibilities that this weight entails and the limitations upon its exercise of power. Such a leadership cannot come from a single individual but only from the whole political spectrum, Executive and Legislative. For this reason, only some variant of responsible government making inescapable the continuous interaction of both branches can do the job. The separation of powers—understandable in its own terms, possible even today for a small country with a high degree of consensus like Switzerland—is out of the question for the United States and dangerous for the rest of the world which has the right to know who speaks for a super-Power. After two hundred years, the Founding Fathers deserve a rest.

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In the second place, while the government of the United States must take responsibilities for a "general welfare" unknown to those who coined the phrase, the experiment of doing it in the New Deal way, through the exercise of the federal taxing and regulatory powers (however defensible in terms of social justice), will not work because the size and complexity of the machinery needed is too great for anyone to control. Professor Schlesinger is too hard on President Nixon in respect of the latter's wish to restore power to States and municipalities. If there could be a general devolution of power away from Washington, the federal government would better be able to concentrate upon what cannot be devolved—foreign relations and the overall health of the economy. It is curious that Professor Schlesinger who so admires the Founding Fathers pays so little attention to their most fruitful discovery—federalism.

GROVER CLEVELAND (*1892*)

FINALLY, AND perhaps most important of all, the United States needs to develop some notion of the State as such. Nothing has done more harm both over Viet Nam and over Watergate than the identification of the President with the State itself. It was the greatest error of the Founding Fathers—though not necessarily an intentional one—to confound the role of Head of State with that of head of the Executive. An abdication is less disruptive than an impeachment or even the suggestion of one. It is too late for the United States to enjoy the blessings of hereditary constitutional monarchy—the only kind of government, in my view, that could commend itself to a rational man—but it would be possible to go some way in that direction, as indeed President Eisenhower rather clumsily tried to do. His political instinct was much nearer right than he is given credit for by intellectuals.

It would also mean not merely a non-political Presidency as the ultimate goal but also a proper corps of permanent servants of the State rather than the transients from corporation board-rooms or academic common-rooms or the city rooms of the media. It is not necessarily the case, as Professor Schlesinger seems to think, that this means a slavish imitation of the British civil service. For one thing the British model is passing through a bad phase itself—as witness our present tribulations in Britain and the unpreparedness with which we face them—though Professor Schlesinger is wrong to accept Mr Harold Wilson's attempt to excuse his 1964 government's failures as due to bad advice from civil servants or to their lack of enthusiasm for his policies. But there are other ways of making service to the State a suitable object of ambition beyond the bounds and constraints of party. Otherwise the military will continue to get the best of arguments with civilians just in the way that Mr Hughes both illustrates and deplores. After all the military are professionals.

It is probably fully understandable that questions like those, and others perhaps even more far-reaching, do not readily occur to writers as immersed in the experience of their own country as Professor Schlesinger and Mr Hughes. They are the questions outsiders or onlookers may ask. But who was it said, "the onlooker sees more of the game"?

"Computers Need People"

I see they are advertising for people
In the Underground.
A good place for it, you still find people
In the Underground.

The train drivers are practically all
Coloured computers these days.
Should coloured computers get jobs
That white people could do almost as well?

It takes a computer to work out
The rights and wrongs of these questions.

D. J. Enright

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Peter Porter

Dreamtime

To the short-of-breath an apotheosis,
To come upstairs behind some Metternich
Of the party-giving world and still be
Recognised: your hostess, her rings shining,
Ready to rescue you out of corners.

This might be the door opening on a dream
Of a prosperous terrain where at last
Scenery germane to the heart is displayed:
Silos with clocks, the Norman church deaf
To the procession with the lilied corpse,

Half-Cockaigne among the sea-weed grasses
And the animal moon awake all day,
Severe streets opening suddenly after fields
Of grain, the calm citizens ambling through
Huzzahs of troops for a near-sighted heir;

The parturition of the Princess golden
With balconies, and the Revolutionaries' Smithy
Watched by a bored spy; melancholy hours
In the cafés without even a betrayal
Or a sexual touch of foot or finger.

That is the scene, but it may change.
We may hurry to some Horatian outhouse
For the evening reading and discourse blood
On the pink-faced terrace, someone nearby
Playing the flute at a lizard listening.

Hate in the hills where the rebels practise
Games with black gourds, boredom in the library
At any time of day, but fear always,
Fear in everything. Responsibility for this
Is the question on each person's tongue.

They will try to get you to dream a new world
For them, one made clean by courage. You
May need to give a hostage as you do now
When you see approaching the perennial bore
Who is host to nature and a lord of change.

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Peter Reading

Night-Piece

Although ready to, I can't get to sleep yet,
detained by forty huntsmen galloping
all dressed black up an unfamiliar
lane, or clocking a ton in a sports job
steered by the wife of a friend. I sweat
curry powder, events of the day are reduced
to clipped rushes . . . off goes the Sprite with the blonde
whom I kiss goodnight as if for the last time.

We sit facing west towards evening, watch
England grow dark and disappear, swallow
two more finos and draw the curtains.
And then one more, to make up for lost time.

Ball claps bat. We're aware today
of perhaps our only achievement ever—
carrying on as if nothing was wrong (though
I kiss you tonight as if for the last time).

Turned earth, the empty trench, then we enter
among varicose alabaster knights
and petrified other Elizabethans.
The Great G minor Fantasia
knits an acoustic cobweb; however
curtains refuse to reveal the player
playing tonight as if for the last time.

Even our best friends' three-year-old daughter,
an Armageddon of pink ice-cream,
reminds me that there are too many of us.
Kiss her tonight as if for the last time.

Black in the face, gasping fish-out-of-water,
white palmed, white rim round mouth, baby gulps
Al-Jolson-like (Mammy Mammy Mammy,
a million miles for your smiles for the last time).

Latest computer forecasts inform us
in thirty years' time she'll be gulping for real.
Top-up your larynx before they call Time Please.

The modern finale is molto vivace
. . . a pause . . . across fields to the chancel wafts
applause, a good man is run-out at thirty.
Pick up his stump, hang it up for the last time.

Under the curtain the unrevealed player
(volles werk volles werk spun and woven)
cuts to a weird choreography done
by Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos,
circling the bed in infectious ragtime.

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The Wickedness of Evil

On Manson, Murder & Mysticism—By R. C. ZAEHNER

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER wrote in 1942: "The great masquerade of evil has played havoc with all our ethical concepts. For evil to appear disguised as light, charity, historical necessity, or social justice is quite bewildering to anyone brought up on our traditional ethical concepts, while for the Christian who bases his life on the Bible it merely confirms the fundamental wickedness of evil. . . ."

"Evil" and, even more, Bonhoeffer's term "the wickedness of evil" have a very old-fashioned ring nowadays, particularly among those of us who are engaged in the interesting and, I am afraid, fashionable study of comparative religion, the history of religion, *Religionswissenschaft* or whatever you wish to call it. For both "evil" and especially "sin" have come to be regarded as Judaeo-Christian taboos designed to exclude from our experience a whole range of liberating activities which (it is alleged) lie at the heart of the mystical religions of the East. Morality, on the whole, seems to be out—while ecstasy is very much "in": with the result that most of us no longer feel we have a fixed frame of reference from which we can begin to make any sense of our lives. Traditional Christianity as taught by the Churches no longer seems to make any sense. The new theologies are, if anything, more barren than the old: the Mystic East has been called in to redress the "over-rational" imbalance of the West, and as the French novelist Georges Bernanos said, "we find ourselves in an indeterminate sphere, among the stones and the rafters, in the rain. . . ." Or to quote Bonhoeffer again: "One may even ask whether there have ever before in human history been people with so little ground under their feet—people to whom every available alternative seemed equally intolerable, repugnant, and futile." But he also adds (and perhaps he is right): "or perhaps one should ask whether the responsible thinking people of any generation that stood at a turning-point in history did not feel much as we do, simply because something new was emerging that could not be seen in the existing alternatives."

IN THE FIELD OF RELIGION we now have (very roughly) two existing alternatives. On the one hand we have Christianity which, though diminished in every way, cannot simply be written off just yet with the glib serenity with which so many humanists would gladly dismiss it. On the other, we have the upsurge of Eastern Mysticism which seems to have bewitched the minds of so many of the young. Between the two there is a gulf fixed with the result that neither seems to have the slightest idea of what the other is talking about. It would seem to me that the only factor the two have in common is an equal dislike and distrust of human reason. Between the two the obvious bridge is, I suppose, Teilhard de Chardin who has re-interpreted Christianity along mystical and evolutionary lines. Teilhard has, of course, been criticised on the Christian side for his apparent disregard of the fundamental Christian dogma of original sin; but the criticism should go deeper. For what he is by-passing is not so much original sin (which can very well be interpreted in evolutionary terms) but what Bonhoeffer called the essential "*wickedness* of evil." Let us, then, dispose of him first.

DURING THE Second World War most of us (including Bonhoeffer who paid for his convictions with his life) considered that Hitler represented something so evil that even war was justified if his tyranny were to be destroyed. Not so Teilhard.

> "Just now [Teilhard wrote], the Germans deserve to win because, however bad or mixed is their spirit, they have more spirit than the rest of the world. It is easy to criticise and despise the fifth column. But no spiritual aim or energy will ever succeed, or even deserve to succeed, unless it proves able to spread and keep spreading a fifth column."[1]

[1] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters to Two Friends 1926–1954*, Collins, Fontana Library (1972).

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This one quotation must suffice and I will spare the reader his scientific-progressive dithyrambs on the subject of the atom bomb. In any case I cannot myself reconcile this worship of "progress" for its own sake with Christianity in any hitherto known form. This seems to me to go a very long way beyond rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and appears to uphold with considerable vigour the doctrine that might is right. In the West this doctrine has hitherto found little favour since it was castigated by Plato (a Greek, one should remember, not a Jew). And perhaps one ought also to be reminded at this stage that Western civilisation, as we know it, has been far more Graeco-Roman than Judaeo-Christian. Its father, I like to think, was not so much "Jesus the Jew" as Aristotle the Greek, who tried to think his way from time to eternity without those messy Platonic short-cuts.

Teilhard's bridge, it seems to me, is an irrational bridge between two forms of unreason as well as between one form of amorality and another.

In his last months in prison Bonhoeffer had plenty of time to reflect, and much of this time he spent in reading the Bible and particularly the Old Testament. It is a document of which I was made to read large portions at school, with the results one might expect. For it seemed to me that here was a book that seemed to condone everything that I was supposed to think wicked. This did not escape the imprisoned Bonhoeffer either, though he at least could read the text with the eye of faith. He discerned the goodness of God through the apparent wickedness of his commands to his chosen few.

"Why is it", he asks with some wistfulness, "that in the Old Testament men tell lies vigorously and often to the glory of God (I've now collected the passages), kill, deceive, rob, divorce, and even fornicate . . . doubt, blaspheme, and curse, whereas in the New Testament there is nothing of all this? 'An earlier stage' of religion? That is a very naïve way out. It is one and the same God."

Yes, it *is* one and the same God and he is the God of the Koran *and* the Bhagavad-Gita too. It is the same God whom C. G. Jung analysed in his little book *Answer to Job* and his conclusion was the same: Not only does God condone and even encourage wickedness in man, he is himself wicked or, at the very least, amoral.

> "The Book of Job [Jung wrote] is a landmark in the long historical development of the divine drama. At the time the book was written, there were already many testimonies which had given a contradictory picture of Yahweh—the picture of God who knew no moderation in his emotions and suffered precisely from this lack of moderation. He himself admitted that he was eaten up with rage and jealousy and that this knowledge was painful to him. Insight existed along with obtuseness, loving-kindness along with cruelty, creative power along with destructiveness. Everything was there, and none of these qualities was an obstacle to the other. Such a condition is only thinkable either when no reflecting consciousness is present at all, or when the capacity for reflection is very feeble and a more or less adventitious phenomenon. A condition of this sort can only be described as *amoral*. . . .
>
> "I shall not give a cool and carefully considered exegesis that tries to be fair in every detail, but a purely subjective reaction. In this way I hope to act as a voice for many who feel the same way as I do and to give expression to the shattering emotion that the unvarnished spectacle of divine savagery and ruthlessness produces in us."

NOW, ONE CANNOT have been a Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics for some twenty years without fully agreeing with what Jung says; and one cannot fail to understand how anyone brought up in the more gentle ways of Buddhism, for instance, must be revolted by this savage God who, whatever he may demand of men, wantonly and wilfully himself violates every precept the gentle Buddha had taught. The Buddha did not believe in a creator God, and this is one of the reasons, I think, that so many young people are turning to Buddhism today. If indeed there *is* a creator God and he has indeed *revealed* himself in the Bible and the Koran, then, the Buddhist would surely say: The less we know about him the better: to us he seems much more like Māra, the Buddha's eternal enemy, who keeps the world in being only to prolong forever human misery and suffering.

And what, again, are we to make of a God who commands Joshua to put all the inhabitants of Jericho, men, women and children, to the sword (not to mention the oxen and donkeys)? Or his even more emphatic command to Saul to deal likewise with the Amalekites: "Do not spare them, but kill man and woman, babe and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (I *Samuel* 15: 3)? Saul demurs, and is driven mad for his pains; or, as Scripture puts it, "an evil spirit from Yahweh filled him with terror." Today we would call this genocide, in this case divinely commanded genocide. Does then the wickedness of evil reside in the very heart of God? And in God is might, after all, right? To judge from God's own answer to Job we have no alternative but to say "yes", since God's only answer is that

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because he is omnipotent, he must be obeyed, however capricious, however demented he may show himself to be. Who else but he could claim worship *because* he had made so stupid and careless a creature as the ostrich, "cruel to her chicks as if they were not hers", for "God, you see, has made her unwise, and given her no share of common sense" (*Job*, 39, 16–17)? Job is simply cowed into submission by a display of brute, irrational force, the force of the creator, of evil as well as good, as he himself admits (*Isaiah* 45, 7).

As Jung puts it, Job

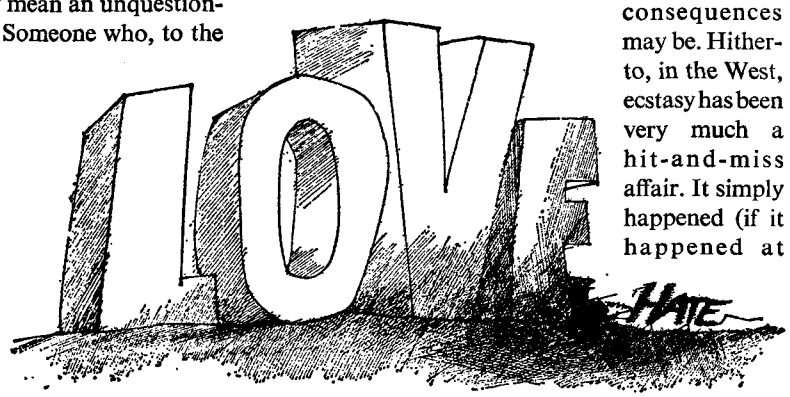
> "clearly sees that God is at odds with himself—so totally at odds that he, Job, is quite certain of finding in God a helper and an 'advocate' against God. As certain as he is of the evil in Yahweh, he is equally certain of the good. In a human being who renders us evil we cannot expect at the same time to find a helper. But Yahweh is not a human being: he is both a persecutor and a helper in one, the one aspect as real as the other. Yahweh is not split but is an *antinomy*—a totality of inner opposites—and this is the indispensable condition of his tremendous dynamism."

How, then, can we call him good? In purely human terms we cannot, not even in the terms of our present-day relative moralism which tends to fight shy of any moral or value judgment whatever. Most people still draw the line at genocide, but Yahweh commanded Joshua and Saul to do just that. But then you cannot argue with this God, for, as he himself says: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways. . . . Yes, the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts" (*Isaiah* 55, 8–9). Yes, this is the "Totally other" all right. But nobody takes him seriously any more. Many have turned for more mystical comfort to the East. And what have they found there?

WHAT THEY HAVE FOUND, it seems to me, is that religion does not necessarily mean an unquestioning obedience to the will of Someone who, to the average man of today, must appear as an irrational and sometimes brutal tyrant. Indeed the very existence of such a supreme being can be brushed aside as altogether unnecessary as was done by the Buddha. Better still, it may also mean that the moral code which this apparently amoral God lays down for men can, in higher states of religious consciousness, be seen to be purely relative. The good of man, then, will no longer be to carry out the commandments of a God who now seems unreasonable, and also totally outmoded, but to enter into a state of being in which both the whole relative order and the God who is supposed to support and transcend it are themselves transcended in "that which is neither born nor made, neither comes to be nor is compounded", as the Buddha once described this ineffable state which he called *Nirvana*. In addition both the Buddhists and the Hindus assure us that this is a state that can be reached here and now in this life. In life itself we can transcend life and all its sufferings and contradictions. We can experience ourselves as immortal and free, "like gods", beyond good and evil. Admittedly, the classical texts of Hinduism and Buddhism offer us little hope that we can achieve this sublime condition in this life; we will probably have to endure countless reincarnations before we achieve our goal.

Never mind. What with the development of modern science and technology it appears that the same ineffable ecstasies can be obtained by the use of drugs, or better still, by the "easy way" of Transcendental Meditation obtainable from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and other well-advertised Gurus. And this is, after all, what so many young people are looking for today. Religion, they feel, is not really a matter of duty, or belief, or even of social service and a compassionate love of one's fellow man, but of direct experience of the Divine. This the churches no longer supply, if they ever did. Hence the rush to Oriental mysticism with its promise of an experience of eternity here and now.

THAT ECSTASY IS desirable is taken for granted, no matter what its content and consequences may be. Hitherto, in the West, ecstasy has been very much a hit-and-miss affair. It simply happened (if it happened at



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all). It came and went like a flash of lightning, leaving one with a sense of absolute certainty and absolute reality behind.

Typical of this kind of ecstasy was that experienced by the Canadian doctor, R. M. Bucke, who has left us an account of his experience and his interpretation of it. It only lasted three minutes. But in those three minutes he reached conclusions about the "true" nature of the universe which never left him. He described the nature of the experience as "Cosmic Consciousness," and held that only such experiences could account for the original impetus at the source of *all* religions.

> "This (Cosmic) consciousness (or "Brahmic Splendour") [Dr Bucke wrote] shows the cosmos to consist not of dead matter governed by unconscious, rigid, and unintending law; it shows it on the contrary as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive; it shows that death is an absurdity, that everyone and everything has eternal life; it shows that the universe is God and that God is the universe, and that no evil ever did or ever will enter into it."[2]

"Cosmic consciousness", he calls it, or "Brahmic bliss", which shows that he must have been conversant with the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. It holds that death is an absurdity and that evil does not really exist. The whole thing was long ago put into a nutshell in the *Katha Upanishad* in these memorable words:

> *Should the killer think: "I kill",*
> *Or the killed, "I have been killed",*
> *Both these have no right knowledge:*
> *He kills not, is not killed.*

The logic of both Dr Bucke and the *Upanishad* seems to me impeccable. In "cosmic consciousness" you pass clean beyond individual existence and live with the life of the whole universe which cannot die. You have realised a "timeless moment", an "eternal Now" (as the Neo-Platonists put it) from the vantage-point of which all action, whether good or evil, must seem ultimately illusory. Here there is no distinction between killing and being killed. You have passed beyond right and wrong, good and evil. Hence you may arrive at the equally dangerous dictum of St Augustine: "Love and do what you will."

THIS MORAL RELATIVISM runs like a quicksilver thread throughout all Hinduism, and it is against this that the Buddha reacted. *He*, at least, was only too conscious of the reality of evil, identifying it as he did with transience. For him, salvation meant release from the impermanence of this world into an eternal state of being, the eternal "Now" if you like. But in order to reach this state, he maintained, you must first master the basic moral commandments —do not kill, do not fornicate, do not steal, do not lie, do not envy—all interpreted much as Jesus interpreted the corresponding commandments in the Decalogue. To reach the deathless you must first be good, that is, totally un-self-regarding.

However, there is always the Devil to be reckoned with, and the Buddha had distinct views on the Devil, though not Zoroastro-Christian ones (to which I myself incline). According to the Zoroastrians, closely followed by St John, the principal characteristics of the Devil are that he is a murderer, a liar, and a deceiver. To corrupt and distort every religion in the interests of the "wickedness of evil" is his dearest concern. As Bernanos put it:

> "He is in the prayer of the hermit, in his fasts and penances, at the heart of the deepest ecstasy, and in the silence of the heart. He poisons holy water, burns in the consecrated wax, breathes in the breath of virgins . . . corrupts every religious way."

"Corrupts every religious way"—that is about it. He makes us blind to the "wickedness of evil" in Buddhism just as much as in Judaism and Christianity. In Buddhism the case was, perhaps, more difficult—since there is no omnipotent God who in the last analysis must himself, though good, have created evil for reasons we cannot understand, and he does not explain. But in Buddhism there is no such God, and the Buddha had shown the infallible way—the hard way—that leads from moral goodness to enlightenment and eternal peace.

BUT BUDDHISM DEVELOPED, as religions do; and it was not the original teachings of the Buddha that made any real impact on the West but its very late Zen variety as transmitted by the late Dr D. T. Suzuki (and his American acolytes) who pointed out that in *Nirvana* there is "neither production nor annihilation, neither coming nor going, *neither right nor wrong*."

We have reached the thin end of the wedge: the Devil's appetite has been whetted. More is to come. An English lady, the Venerable Jiyu Kennett, Abbess of Shasta Abbey, California, has now gone so far as to say: "It is as bad to keep the precepts out of attachment to morality as it is not to keep them at all; it is good to break them

[2] R. M. Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness*, E. P. Dutton, 23rd printing (1966).

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in order to teach the immorality of morality to those still suffering from attachment to morality. . . ." The Devil licks his chops. We seem to be back to the non-existence of killer and killed in the Eternal Now.

For most modern enthusiasts of Eastern mysticism, Eastern mysticism means either Zen or Neo-Vedanta (non-dualism, as it is frequently called). Aldous Huxley called this the "perennial philosophy", and at its heart lies the "coincidence of opposites" so dear to the heart of C. G. Jung. In the Absolute One all the opposites are fused into One, and evil is seen simply as an aspect of good: "justice *is* strife," as our own Heraclitus said. Or, in the famous words of Charles Manson, to whom I shall shortly return: "If God is One, what is bad?" So we have R. M. Bucke, the idealist Canadian doctor, and Charles Manson, the unruffled murderer and master of murderers—curious company, you may think. Perhaps. But behind them lies an ancient Hindu tradition as old as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-Gitā*.

EARLY BUDDHISM did not recognise a creator God nor did it formally admit even an impersonal Absolute. In both respects it seems to have been reacting against the contemporary trend in Hinduism which roundly affirmed the Absolute which it called Brahman or, alternatively, the supreme Self.

For the strict non-dualist only the Absolute—the absolute One—really existed. Therefore, from the absolute point of view, all that takes place in space and time must be an illusion. Hence man's supreme good is to realise himself as the Absolute, and to achieve this absolute point of view two stages must first be traversed. First, the everyday "ego" must be suppressed; secondly, it must be replaced by the absolute Self (which is the *real* you). Only when this is achieved can the identity of all changing things in the changeless One be realised—a One in which there is no difference at all. In Hindu terms this realisation of the Self/Absolute/All necessarily means release from all bondage to works, or, if you prefer it in Sanskrit, to *karma* (a concept with which Charles Manson was quite familiar). By transcending *karma*, of course, you transcend good and evil; and about this the early Hindu texts, unlike their Buddhist counterparts, make no bones at all. Whether Charles Manson had direct access to these original texts or not I do not know; but that his "philosophy" was largely based on them as filtered down to him by the various semi-Oriental sects with which he was in contact in the Los Angeles area seems fairly certain. As typical of these texts I quote the following from the *Upanishads:*

> *That from which all words recoil together with the mind,*
> *Unable to attain it—*
> *That is the bliss of Brahman; knowing it,*
> *A man has nothing to fear from anywhere.*

> "Such a man is not worried by the thought: Why did I not do good? Why did I do evil? Knowing good and evil in this way he saves himself: who knows them both as such, he saves himself. Such is the secret teaching."

Or, more striking still:

> "But Indra did not swerve from the truth, for Indra *is* truth. So he said:
> " 'Know me then as I am. This indeed is what I consider most beneficial to mankind—that they should know me. I killed the three-headed son of Tvashtri, I threw the Arunmukha ascetics to the hyenas. Transgressing many a compact, I impaled the people of Prahlada on the sky, the Paulomas to the atmosphere and the Kalakanjas to the earth, and I did not lose a single hair in the process.
> "The man who knows me as I am loses nothing that is his, whatever he does, even though he should slay his mother or father, even though he should steal or procure an abortion. Whatever evil he does, he does not blanch.' "

Charles Manson did not blanch, and in this he was faithful to a very ancient and very venerable Indian tradition. From the same tradition he learnt to accept the doctrine of reincarnation and the law of *karma*. On how this should be interpreted the *Bhagavad-Gitā* is very clear indeed:

> "Finite, they say, are these our bodies indwelt by an eternal embodied self. . . . Fight then, scion of Bharata. Who thinks this self can be a killer, who thinks that it can be killed, both these have no right knowledge: it does not kill nor is it killed."

In other words, on the absolute plane, where there is no time, there can be neither birth nor death: both are equally illusory and therefore meaningless; and if birth and death are meaningless, then reincarnation itself must be meaningless and an illusion. And so the *Gitā* adds:

> "And even if you think that (the soul) is constantly reborn and constantly re-dies, even so you grieve for it in vain. For sure is the death of all that is born, sure is the birth of all that dies: so in a matter that no one can prevent you have no cause to grieve."

On the absolute plane, then, killing and being killed are equally unreal; yet, on the relative plane, the law of *karma*, the natural and moral law which predetermines our next incarnation according to the deeds we have done during this life, still holds sway. But the whole point of the

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Gitā is to persuade Arjuna to fight in an admittedly just war, the "body-count" of which was to reach what must be a record total of some 1,660,020,000 dead. Arjuna does not quite like this idea. But Krishna, the incarnate God, persuades him that once he has reached the absolute state of Brahman which manifests itself as a total detachment from all earthly things and all earthly deeds, whether good or evil, he can no longer be affected by them. He will be like a god, exempt alike from exultation and remorse. Krishna does not mince his words:

> "A man who has reached a state where there is no sense of 'I', whose soul is undefiled—were he to slaughter all these worlds—slays nothing. He is not bound."

In other words, the text seems to say, once you have truly got rid of all sense of ego, you will find that you can murder to your heart's content and feel no remorse at all. You will have passed beyond good and evil.

THESE ARE THE KIND OF DOCTRINES that percolated through to Charles Manson and his acolytes, and, with perfect logic, they acted on them. What shocked the world when they were caught and brought to trial was that none of them showed any sign of remorse. This is not surprising, for, in the jargon of the Manson family, they had reached "*Now*"—the eternal Now of the Neo-Platonists. They had passed beyond time and, therefore, beyond good and evil.

How had this come about? The accepted explanation is that it was all due to LSD. But this is too facile. LSD does produce changed and expanded forms of consciousness, and there have been cases when it has led to suicide; but it does not normally lead to deliberate, callous murder. Of course, Charles Manson used both LSD and "ultra-sex" to produce ecstatic states in his female acolytes. But this does not alone explain how he succeeded in destroying both his own and their consciences, the uncanny hold he had over them, and the serene ruthlessness with which he was prepared to kill human beings, some of whom were total strangers to him. The explanation would appear to be threefold: (*1*) he had what seems to have been a classic "enlightenment" experience; (*2*) he had been in constant conflict with society since his earliest years; and (*3*) in addition he came to identify himself with the Christ of the Book of Revelation. These three facts between them account for Manson's rather peculiar spiritual development.

The end and goal of both Hinduism and Buddhism is to pass into a form of existence in which time and space and all the opposites that bedevil human existence are totally transcended, and in which one is literally "dead" to the world but alive in a timeless eternity. This ritual death Charles Manson had already experienced; and, as a result of this experience, he had taught his disciples that they must kill themselves in this way in order to kill others and be free from remorse. At the trial when Linda Kasabian (who had witnessed the ecstatic massacre of Sharon Tate and her associates but was not sufficiently de-ego-ised to participate) appeared as the principal witness for the prosecution, Susan Atkins, the most egoless of them all, "mouthed the words, 'You're killing us.' " To which Linda replied, in a whisper quite audible to the jury (and, it may be added, in a language that made perfect sense to Charlie): "I'm not killing you. You've killed yourselves." She had heard it so often before. "Yes", she said again, in that interminable cross-examination, "he used to say, 'If you are willing to be killed, then you should be willing to kill.'. . ." Charles Manson *had* "killed" himself. But at the trial he had come to life again, not as a superman, or a god, but as a very human being, the son of a teen-age prostitute, a "country boy who never grew up" as he once described himself.

THE WHOLE MYSTICAL BUSINESS had started when Manson was very young. Once he suddenly felt that he was "as powerful and free as Superman." He acquired a makeshift cloak, climbed up to the roof, spread his arms and sailed through the air. It was a great feeling, comparable to an orgasm, and one that he never forgot. As it was related there was the strong implication that Charlie really did fly. No matter. The point here is that the cloak and Superman and the *feeling* are part of the Family's Manson legend. Flying at will, it should be noted, was one of the preternatural powers attributed to the Buddha, and indeed to all who have achieved enlightenment by his followers. The disciples of C. G. Jung would probably say that flying referred to the perfect freedom the enlightened person enjoys in his own "inner space." There is no reason to believe that Charlie did not have this experience. You do not have to be a saint to do that: LSD can do it for you too. He had, then, already experienced freedom of the spirit but not the complete extinc-

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tion of the ego of which the mystics of all religions perpetually speak. Since he was thoroughly conversant with the Bible he realised that he must be crucified if he were to rise again to eternal life. The ego must die if the true Self or "Soul" is to be born. Hence he submitted to a ritual crucifixion.

> "Not far from Spahn ranch the Family discovered an almost secret clearing guarded by a natural surrounding wall of large boulders. On one side of the clearing was a hill, The Hill of Martyrdom. For upon this hilly boulder-shaped secret clearing was performed perhaps the world's first outdoor LSD crucifixion ceremony. Then they snuffed Charlie, in role as Jesus, strapping (not nailing) him to an actual rustic cross, while others, acting as tormentors and apostles, jeered and weeped."

Charlie's crucifixion symbolised for him the death of his ego. It was, however, still only a symbol. He had not experienced what the Zen Buddhists call the "Great Death." This he experienced in a "final flash he received while meditating in the desert." There seems to be no evidence that the experience was brought on by LSD.

"Once", he is reported as saying, "I was walking in the desert and I had a revelation. I'd walked about forty-five miles and that is a lot of miles to walk in a desert. The sun was beating down on me and I was afraid because I wasn't willing to accept death. My tongue swoll up and I could hardly breathe. I collapsed in the sand.

"I looked at the ground and I saw this rock out of the corner of my eye. And I remember thinking in this insane way as I looked at it, 'Well, this as good a place as any to die.' "

Then he started to laugh. "I began laughing like an insane man. I was so happy." Then he rose, "with ease" and walked ten miles to reach safety.

CHARLES MANSON had apparently achieved what the Zen Buddhists call "enlightenment", the supreme lightning flash which shatters the time barrier, and through which one is reborn in eternity where time does not exist and death is, therefore (as Tennyson said), "an almost laughable impossibility." All things are fused into one. *Karma* is transcended and, with it, of course, good and evil. This seems to be the essence of Zen *satori*. Plenty of cases of this have been recorded, and one example, must here suffice—it is the experience of a Japanese executive, aged forty-seven, and this is how he describes it.[3]

> "I was now lying on my back. Suddenly I sat up and struck the bed with all my might and beat the floor with my feet, as if trying to smash it, all the while laughing riotously. My wife and youngest son, sleeping with me, were now awake and frightened. Covering my mouth with her hand, my wife exclaimed: 'What's the matter with you? What's the matter with you?' But I wasn't aware of this until told about it afterwards. My son told me later he thought I had gone mad.
>
> " 'I've come to enlightenment! Shakyamuni and the Patriarchs haven't deceived me!' I remember crying out. . . .
>
> " That morning I went to see Yasutani-roshi and tried to describe to him my sudden experience of the disintegration of heaven and earth. 'I am overjoyed, I am overjoyed!' I kept repeating. . . . Tears came which I couldn't stop. I tried to relate the experience of that night, but my mouth trembled and words wouldn't form themselves. In the end I just put my face in his lap. Patting me on the back he said: 'Well, well, it is rare indeed to experience to such a wonderful degree. It is termed "Attainment of the emptiness of Mind." You are to be congratulated. . . .' "

If this middle-aged Japanese executive is to be congratulated, so is Charles Manson. To my mind there would appear to be little doubt that what he experienced was precisely what the Japanese executive experienced. The special secret of Charles Manson is that he *knew* this timeless moment can at least be simulated by LSD and in a "total" and brutal exercise of the physical sexual act. Lucidly he drew the obvious conclusion which most of our modern Zen Buddhists do all they can to hush up. Where he had been, all things were One and there was "no diversity at all." He had passed beyond good and evil. At last he was free!

How that Japanese executive used his "freedom" we are not told. Perhaps he too had a mind as consistently logical as Manson's and, with his greater experience, he may even now be vicariously murdering the innocent citizens of Tokyo. Like Charlie he, too, had done it the hard way, the way of *zāzen*, "just sitting"—and sitting and sitting—until that wicked discursive mind disintegrates and you *see* that right *is* wrong, and good *is* evil. Charlie didn't sit: he walked forty-five miles until he reached the point of exhaustion: he collapsed and *saw*. He saw a rock: but it was no longer an ordinary rock but the "Uncarved Block" of the Taoists which "is the symbol of the primal undifferentiated unity underlying the apparent complexity of the universe."

[3] Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, Harper & Row (1966).

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"The sun was beating down on Charlie." The sun is hot, and one of the Sanskrit words for heat is *tapas*. But *tapas* also came to mean fierce ascetic practices resulting in the mortification—the making dead—of the mind. There is a *tapas* of sitting—*zāzen*; and a *tapas* of walking—Charlie's *tapas*. The physical result of all forms of *tapas* is the same."

> "Recent physiological investigations of these practices in a laboratory setting tend to confirm the notion that provoked alterations in body chemistry and body rhythm are in no small way responsible for the dramatic changes in consciousness attendant upon these practices."[4]

All very interesting, no doubt. But Charles Manson instinctively knew that what he had experienced in the desert after walking forty-five miles in the blazing sun could also be experienced under LSD and ultra-sex. As he knew, so he acted.

THE EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY Zen seems to be identical with what Dr Bucke called Cosmic Consciousness. This is the second level of consciousness from which Charles Manson acted. Under the influence of mescalin, Aldous Huxley spoke of "Is-ness" and of the "eternal Now" of Meister Eckhart, the medieval German mystic. Charlie knew all about this too.

> "No past—time burnt—books burnt—past burnt. . . . All time factors melted in the now. The now of Charlie."

The man who, like Charlie, has achieved cosmic consciousness, lives in and from the level of the Now; but the average mortal who lives in, for, and from ego-consciousness only, can only find the Now in death. Hence it was only logical that he should deal in death. "Death is Charlie's trip," as Tex Watson, the most devoted and savage of his murder-squad, laconically and truly observed. And so when one of his minor associates, Shorty Shea, showed signs of "snitching",

> ". . . they got Shorty in his car. . . . They hit him in the head with a big wrench. They took him with them. They let him sweat. When he would come to, they would cut him some more. He was begging for his life. They finally had to cut his head off. He got to *Now* and they killed him."

Logical enough, you will say; but Charlie was himself perfectly capable of making certain distinctions, and he could concede that there were occasions on which people were not ready physically to undergo the supreme experience. "Her ego wasn't ready to die", he said of Linda Kasabian on one occasion, an imperfection on her part which was to prove fatal to him.

Once you have reached the stage of the "eternal Now", all is "One", as Parmenides taught in ancient Greece. "After all", Manson explained, "We are all one. . . ." Killing someone, therefore, is just like breaking off a piece of a cookie. And did not the Manson adage hold, "If you're willing to be killed you should be willing to kill"? He was perfectly sincere in this and sometimes would hand his knife to an adversary, bidding him to kill him. The offer was never accepted, for the Family regarded Charlie as almost divine.

This was his third level of awareness: the crucified ego merges into the Infinite, transcends Time, and *descends* again transfigured into a "superego" or "superman", eternal in essence but operating in time.

"We are all one"—this is the obverse of the eternal Now. This whole philosophy was long ago summed up in an ancient Hindu scripture: "Whoso thus knows that he is the Absolute, becomes their own self." Or as Country Sue, a member of the Family, put it in her more rustic way: "And like, I'm willing to die for anyone, anyone who's me, 'cause it's like one soul."

THE "SOUL" PLAYS an important part in the Manson ideology. As in Hinduism, it is the Absolute both with and without attributes. Without attributes it is the "Now" of which nothing can be positively predicated. With attributes it is incarnate in Charlie Manson: "I am Charlie and Charlie is me" is a correct statement of the faith. More elaborately formulated it could be put in this way: "Charlie is above all wants and desires—he is dead. It isn't Charlie any more. It is the Soul. They are Charlie and Charlie is they."

All adepts were indeed the Soul in a sense, but Charlie was the Soul absolutely. For you can conceive of this total Soul either as the indwelling spirit that pervades all things or as the controlling genius of all things, what we would call God. As the same Hindu scripture I have quoted earlier puts it:

> "The Soul *(ātman)* is the Lord of all beings, King of all beings. Just as the spokes of a wheel are fixed together on the hub and tire, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all vital breaths and all these selves fixed together in this Soul."

[4] P. E. L. Masters and Jean Houston, *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*, Anthony Blond, London, and Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York (1966).

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This was precisely Charlie's relationship to the Family: he was their essence and their Lord. Oddly enough, Aristotle had precisely the same idea.

"We must consider", Aristotle writes, "in which sense the nature of the Whole is the 'good' and the 'supremely good'; whether it is something separate and existent in its own right or is [a principle of] order; or whether it is both, as with an army. For the 'good' of an army consists in its order, and yet it *is* the general or rather it is chiefly the general."

One could scarcely have a more accurate description of the relationship between Charles Manson and his Family. Its "good" consisted both in the order that reigned in its ranks and the "general" who gave it its orders. The difference, of course, is that Aristotle, like the Buddha, also believed in a moral order. He did not believe in that ancient Hindu assertion that (seen from the absolute point of view) good and evil, order and disorder, are reconciled in the One, as Heraclitus and Empedocles had done before him, and as Charles Manson was to believe long after him. Believing, the Family acted on his beliefs, and many a "rich pig" was to meet a gruesome and untimely end because Charles Manson, so far from being mad, seems to have had a lucidly logical mind. He took deadly seriously the ambiguities and ambivalences of Indian religion as transmitted to him but drew conclusions that were the exact opposite of conclusions conventionally drawn.

FOR MANY, Charles Manson personifies what Bonhoeffer called the "wickedness of evil." Perhaps: but on his own premises he was anything but illogical. He had won his flash of enlightenment the hard way, and he had learnt that in Hindu mysticism and in Zen the enlightened man who has realised himself as the Absolute—what he called the Soul—was beyond good and evil. "If God is One, what is bad?" he is quoted as saying. And again, as an assiduous student of the Bible, he knew that God had commanded genocide in ancient times and that the Word of God would return in the last days, "his cloak soaked in blood" and he himself destined "to tread out the wine of Almighty God's fierce anger" (*Rev.*, 19, 12–15). Perhaps he was a little fanciful in identifying himself with this Rider of the Apocalypse.[5]

Interpret it as you will. Say with Lucretius, if you will: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (So many evils has religion inspired). Or take the Zoroastrian way out and insist that evil is, and must be, a principle independent of and absolutely hostile to God. Alternatively, if you believe in God at all, you must accept the Jewish paradox in some form and simply admit that the "wickedness of evil" must somehow proceed from the very heart of God and that what God excuses in himself he hates in us. There is no solution to the mystery unless we can understand these hauntingly cryptic words of the Hindi poet Kabir:[6]

God is a Thug: and Thuggery's what he has brought to the world!
Yet how can I live without him, tell me, my motherly friend.

Who is the husband? Who is the wife of whom?
Ponder on that in your inmost heart.

Who is the son? And who is the father of whom?
Who is it who dies? Who is wracked with torment?

Says Kabir: What of it? I'm pleased with the Thug as he is:
For once I recognised the Thug, the Thuggery vanished away.

[5] On the Manson case, in addition to the US and UK press reports, I have used: Ed Sanders, *The Family* (1972) and George Bishop, *Witness to Evil* (1971).

[6] Free rendering of Professor Charlotte Vaudeville's French translation of Kabir (not yet published).

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BROADCASTING

Making "Policy" for Whom?

A Comment on Ludovic Kennedy—By GEORGE CAMACHO

SOME MONTHS AGO, nearly four years after my retirement, I jotted down a few reflections on how policies develop and are carried out in the BBC. For most of the thirty-one years I worked in it I was involved in policy considerations of one sort or another. I was not very satisfied with the result, for looking back, I wonder at the assurance with which I advocated this policy or that and even more at some of the decisions I made. I don't think they were necessarily wrong, mainly because I know of no standard by which they could be judged; but they seem more difficult to justify in retrospect. In any case I put my notes aside until Ludovic Kennedy's reflections in ENCOUNTER (November 1973) led me to look at them again.

I found Kennedy's views refreshing and entertaining, though I did not wholly agree with them; what he had to say about broadcasting it seemed to me was limited to certain aspects which, as I see it, are only a part of a much wider canvas. It is no criticism of Kennedy to say that his approach was that of the performer; equally I claim no superiority for my approach, which is that of the official, the organizer, the planner and the decision-taker. Both he and I are or have been broadcasters but most of my work, apart from a first year as the Spanish American announcer, was concerned with what should be broadcast and who should appear on the air, whereas most of his work has been concerned with how to broadcast within the terms of a brief, often no doubt very elastic and giving great scope to exercise his undoubted talents. I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of my function at the expense of his. But in respect of "policy" his function has been to implement and interpret; mine was to help to formulate and to accept responsibility for interpretation.

THE PROBLEM we have both had to face is the fact that "policy" is an uncertain word. It is often used to define purpose; but too frequently it degenerates into a defensive barrier on the basis that the general statement often sounds more acceptable than the particular application. It is a word that can be used in attempts to justify the evil and the absurd; from genocide to the use of napalm, from mayhem to baratry, from Concorde to Maplin, from Europe's Common Agricultural lunacies to the explosion of nuclear devices in Muraroa, and to banning the sale of Centurion spare parts at the moment of greatest need.

Fortunately policy in broadcasting is never on this scale of importance. I agree with Kennedy that the influence of broadcasting is frequently exaggerated to a near lunatic degree. I go further; I do not think that any greater directness in speech, any reduction of circumlocutory evasion, can be attributed mainly to television, or to radio or any other medium. They may have contributed; but they have, essentially, reflected a general and healthy trend in our society towards franker and more direct expression of opinion. There is a long way to go yet. Nor do I think television is responsible for the decline of the "plummy" voice as Kennedy suggests. Long before television audiences outstripped those of radio, some of us were inveighing against the monotonously well modulated upper-middle-class voices of most announcers: as far back as during World War II Pickles (Wilfred) and Urquhart tried to inject respectively a Yorkshire and Glaswegian flavour, but the listeners did not like it. In the late 1950s *Saturday Club* on the Light was presented by a man who, I was told, had been a milk roundsman in the West Country; and very well he did it and very popular the programme was. Nor do I agree with Kennedy that broadcasters (the officials rather than the performers) should try to arrest the changes in the pronunciation of words, which are inevitable in a living language. I share most of the preferences he lists, but it

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surprises me that he should advocate *ad*ult rather than ad*ult*, which I prefer; those dictionaries I have consulted, including the shorter Oxford, share my preference. I agree with him about the absurdity of "in my judgment"; even more irritating I find "at this moment of time", "in this day and age", "in my estimation", "grass roots" and not a few others, but I do not think that broadcasters should adopt the policy of trying to suppress them; irritating though they are they tell you something about the man or woman who uses them. In so far as there is a policy in this area it should be one of understandability. In my early B.B.C. days when occasionally I was called upon to announce or read a news bulletin in English (in the old Empire Service) I was told that in regard to foreign names I should not necessarily aim at the correct pronunciation; I should rather pronounce them in the manner which would be most likely to be understood by the listener. It was not a bad yardstick.

BUT POLICY IN THIS AREA does not seem to me to be of great importance. There are many other policies of greater significance, some of which in the B.B.C., are formulated or endorsed by the Board of Governors; I have little knowledge of how these things are done by the I.B.A. and the programme companies, so what I say applies only to the B.B.C. which has to formulate, adjust and carry through policies in many fields. The use of wavelengths is one in which it is not a free agent since government must honour international agreements it has entered into. But, for example, policy decisions have to be made about how much money is to be spent on what; the fact that government determines the license fee might give it some measure of control, but it is a power I believe never to have been abused. There have to be policies about premises and buildings, where they are to be, how much is to be spent on them and whether they are to be rented or purchased outright. To what extent the interests of today's listeners and viewers should be protected by spending more money on programmes and less on the purchase of buildings, as against the interests of tomorrow's listeners who may find too great a proportion of their licence money being spent on exorbitant rents for premises that might have been relatively cheaply purchased yesterday. There is no end to it all. A policy in respect of the recognition of unions; a policy in regard to fees for performers and speakers; a policy for staff gradings and the assessments of responsibilities; a policy about salaries, retirement, recruitment, publications, participation in public events and exhibitions, catering services, studio equipment, office accommodation, secretarial services and, I imagine, typewriters, stationery and paper clips.

But it is policy in regard to output which constitutes the broadcasters' basic dilemma; for most decisions in this area cannot be democratically determined. The listener and viewer can have no real say in the nature of BBC 1 or BBC 2 or Radios 1 to 4, and even less on that of commercial television. He or she cannot affect the decision that Radio 1 should be mostly pop, Radio 3 mostly good music during the day, or Radio 4 mostly spoken word. He cannot change the arrangement by which BBC 1 and BBC 2 are mixed services both designed to have a wide appeal, rather than that each should be specialised to cater for particular groups of listeners. He cannot prevent the broadcaster who wants to educate by stealth from placing a serious informative documentary between a pop singer and a comedian. The fact is the listeners and viewers can only reveal preferences among the programmes that are offered them. They cannot, or at least never do, ask for anything new or radically different. They did not ask for the Light or for the Third; they did not ask for pop on Radio 1; they did not clamour for BBC 2 or for ITV any more than they now do for a fourth television channel; they did not even ask for colour, let alone for local radio. Most of them were provided because broadcasters thought they should provide them or because they and other interested parties wanted to. All these were decisions broadcasters had to make, guided in part by what they thought right, in part by what they thought acceptable and, as often as not, by a compromise between the two, in some cases influenced by what they thought would be profitable. These decisions have been made at a relatively high level; some, like for example the provision of commercial television and local radio, by government; most of the others in the B.B.C. by the Board of Governors. But, in my experience, the proposals have originated at the executive level: directors, controllers of output services and heads of supply and production departments. Producers and editors have had curiously little to recommend in the area which sets and adjusts the framework of broadcasting. But they have had much more to do with that mixture of precedent and corporate wisdom which gradually builds up a corpus of policy in regard to what should be done within a determined framework. It is they who together with the more senior executives gradually build up that amalgam of case-law and climate of opinion, that consensus of views, which comes to be accepted as policy.

I HAD MY FIRST EXPERIENCE of how this loose, but in the main effective, system works, early in my

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B.B.C. career; by then the war had begun and I was in charge of programmes for Latin America. The Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information thought highly of Robert Vansittart's *Black Record*. We were urged to broadcast translations to Latin America. Patiently I explained that I could not myself altogether believe the content of this document, and I saw no reason to think that Latin Americans would believe it at all. It was, I agreed, our policy to tell the truth; but however truthful *Black Record* might be, there was little point in broadcasting it if it would not be believed. And so was created a new strand of policy in my mind. It was not enough to be truthful but essential also to be credible. It affected my view of external broadcasting until I left it. In any case, I was supported by my seniors, our view prevailed, and *Black Record* was not broadcast to Latin America.

It would be wearisome to cite even a tenth of the many such examples I could give from the Latin American Service and later, when I became Head of European Productions, in the European Service, not least in regard to the setting up of Western Union, OEEC (as it was at first) and NATO.

But it was not perhaps until I moved over to the domestic services and became responsible for planning Light Programme that I began to realise that policy could be a more complex matter in the domestic than in the external services. Was it right, for example, to disappoint regular listeners, about two or three million of them, on three mornings of one week of the year, to make way for coverage of the Tourist Trophy races in the Isle of Man, when in fact, on those three mornings the audience sank to some 800,000? During a holiday I had seen the avidity with which garage attendants and mechanics listened to the T.T. commentaries. It convinced me that the intensity of their satisfaction outweighed this occasional disregard of the majority; and after all, a majority in one sense is made up of minorities in others. And so the policy of covering the T.T. races was continued. Was the decision right? Looking back, I wonder at my assurance in making it.

There was the matter of theatre organ music. A regular half-hour programme on Saturday mornings attracted an audience of a million-and-a-half. To judge from correspondence, sometimes, it seemed, inspired rather than spontaneous, the programme gave great pleasure to the older generation. But it was in the days when a great many people worked, and when many housewives still did most of their shopping on Saturday mornings. Simple observation, confirmed by reference to appropriate government departments, told me that it was the younger generation which was free to listen. Variety Department, as it was then called, at my request, supplied *Skiffle Club* (remember skiffle?). Theatre organ fans protested, but the number of listeners rose. I asked for a longer programme but was rightly warned by the professionals that the popularity of skiffle was waning. And so emerged *Saturday Club*, a two-hour mixture of lingering rock and roll, dance music and the new "pop", with a dash of jazz. The effect was startling. Within a few months audiences had risen from between one-and-a-half and three million to between eleven and thirteen million. Clearly we were giving satisfaction to many more than ever before. But did that prove that the decision was right? When I read glib statements that Radio 1 "pop" is an imitation of *Radio Caroline* and other pirates, I reflect that it was perhaps they who imitated *Saturday Club*. In some ways I hope I'm wrong—a terrible thing, it might be thought, to be responsible for!

IT WAS LATER STILL as Head of Radio Talks and Current Affairs that the full impact of policy in the spoken word was brought home to me. It was then I realised why those who have responsibility in this area are often accused of arrogance. To make decisions requires some measure, if not of arrogance, at least of self-assurance. The broadcaster must take decisions, must have the strength to stick to them or to change them, if and when he is proved wrong.

Some aspects of policy are clear enough in theory if not in practice. On controversial issues the broadcaster must seek to ensure the ventilation of all valid points of view; but it must be admitted that the use of the word "valid", to some extent, begs the question. Nevertheless, as a rough-and-ready guide it works reasonably well. Problems arise, for example, in the matter of interviewing. It seems clear to me that the interviewer's task is to represent the public—to ask those questions to which the public is likely to want to know the answers; to expose deceit, inconsistency and evasion. Difficult though it may be, I believe this task can and should be carried out with courtesy.

IT IS NOT, in general, in the big and broad controversial issues, but in lesser matters, that the broadcasters' decisions may seem arrogant. I, for example, brought to an end weekly items on astrology in *Woman's Hour*. "You may only broadcast about astrology," said I, "if you send it up." My argument was, that popular though they might be, a responsible organisation like the B.B.C. should not encourage belief in what the overwhelming majority of sensible and educated

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people hold to be nonsense. Had I the moral right to do this? Some producers regarded the decision as arbitrary and dictatorial, and certainly there were listeners who regretted it. What right had I, I now ask myself, to deprive them of what they wanted?

Still another example arose when the controversy on whether fluoride should be introduced into drinking water began to attract attention, and it became the approved policy of the Ministry of Health, the British Medical Association, and the British Dental Association. Was it right to give its opponents occasional air time, but to refuse the right of reply on each occasion that a passing and approving reference was made in a broadcast? The fluoride issue is still, I see, a live one.

In a wholly different context, was it right to prevent Dr David Caute from using *the* four-letter word in a quotation from one of Henry Miller's *Tropics* (I can never remember which is which) which he was to review for the Third Programme? I based myself on an accepted policy that while it was inescapable that the broadcaster should give offence to some at times, it was the more important that he should only do so when it could not be avoided; and all the other reviews of the book I had seen had avoided offensive quotations. Some seventeen pundits protested in the correspondence columns of *The Listener* and led to my replying that if I were to raise a banner of freedom, I would prefer it to bear a device other than the word they had chosen; and I added that it was more courageous on this occasion to reject than to accept. The fact is that such protests as would have been provoked had the talk been broadcast would have been far less shrill and self-righteous.

Was it right to tell the newly appointed chairman of one of the two major political parties (perhaps, today, I should say three) that an extended interview he had recorded could not be broadcast because it was tendentious to the point of being barely justifiable as a party political broadcast (which it wasn't)? It was my good fortune that the eminently reasonable politician in question, run to earth by telephone in a provincial hotel on the day the broadcast was scheduled, philosophically accepted the decision with the laconic comment that it was an excellent lesson to have learned in his first week as chairman.

MUCH IS MADE, and rightly, of the freedom of the B.B.C. But where does that freedom lie? With the Board of Governors or the Board of Management? With the Service Planning Controllers or the Heads of Supply Departments? With the Editors and Producers? Or with the speakers and performers? Once the nature of a spoken-word programme is decided and the participants chosen, has the broadcasting official the right to interfere with what is said? That in fact he does so is undeniable, and, I would contend, inescapable. For what would editorial freedom amount to if there were no editorial function? But where does that executive function lie? The further down the less control there would be, and possibly, though by no means always, the more irresponsible it might appear. The further up the firmer the control, and, though not necessarily, the more stuffy and less vital and adventurous it might become. Was it arrogance on my part whatever came my way and fortunately a great deal never did, to resolve that the buck stopped with me? To pass information up, where it seemed desirable, yes; to consult, rarely.

I have heard it naively said that the policy of the B.B.C., as far as its output is concerned, is succinctly laid down in the Charter; its function is to entertain, inform and educate. But this does not go very far. It is almost impossible to make a sound, utter a word or display a picture which can't be held to be entertaining, informative, or educative—and sometimes all three—in some way or other. So, in fact, the Charter gives the B.B.C. freedom to broadcast anything it chooses. Though the government has a residual veto over any particular broadcast, it is a right that has never been made use of and has consequently atrophied to such a degree that it is doubtful whether any government would now wish to exercise it. It is fair to doubt also whether those who wield authority in the B.B.C. would wish to give grounds for the exercise of the power of veto ever to be contemplated. The fact is that both broadcasters and government have to act with an eye to public opinion; and in this context "broadcasters" are not the men and women, performers and speakers, who appear before the microphone and camera, but the officials who decide what, in what context and by whom, is to be broadcast. It is they, Directors, Service Controllers, Departmental Heads, Editors and Producers, who exercise the editorial independence of which the B.B.C. is justifiably proud, and who have to make decisions relatively great and small often on a daily basis. It is they, subject to some guidance from the Board of Governors, who gradually build up a corpus of precedent and principles which comes to be accepted as policy. That policy is never static, for if the results of its application cease to be acceptable to the more or less informed public, government might be tempted to interfere, and legislators hungry for renown are never lacking to proclaim their belief in the need for draconian measures to control

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the arrogance of broadcasters. There are as many legislators lacking in wisdom as there are foolish and arrogant broadcasters; with this difference—that foolishly arrogant broadcasters are more easily removed from places where they can do harm than are legislators.

THERE REMAINS THE QUESTION of what degree of guidance should come from the Board of Governors and what degree of responsibility they should have for individual programmes. Of course the late Lord Normanbrook and other chairmen have been right in claiming that ultimately the Board is responsible for policy. But if it is responsible for laying down policy and for endorsing or amending the corporate wisdom that experience and precedent have built up over the years, is it also responsible for its application? Should any pre-recorded programmes or advance scripts be submitted to them for acceptance, rejection, or amendment? In my view, the answer is no. For if the Board of Governors make executive decisions in this area, the public might rightly ask: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* And the sillier politicians seek to impose an overall Broadcasting Council, which, of course, would be a classic example of Parkinsonian nonsense.

The Swedes have sought an answer to this problem. In Swedish broadcasting there are some officials who have absolute authority over certain programmes: all programmes are subject to one or other of these officials. No one may gainsay their decisions, from above, from below or from outside. But it may be that this is too negative a function and that those who have it will become little more than official censors. It is a solution that smacks of rigidity and might reduce the elasticity that makes possible development and advance. But the principle it seeks to protect is a sound one.

Someone must make decisions; someone must have the power that goes with responsibility. For power, *pace* Lord Acton and Malcolm Muggeridge, is not necessarily corrupting or evil and no one can sensibly accept responsibility without authority. That authority, it seems to me should lie with the chief executive, who, in the B.B.C., is the Director General. How to use and delegate that authority is not easily determined, however great and apparently comprehensive the corpus of policy that has grown up. Therein lies one part of the broadcaster's dilemma. The other is that the policy and wisdom of today do not hold for ever. What was right yesterday is often wrong today; much of what is right today will almost certainly be wrong tomorrow.

IT SEEMS TO ME that this matter of policy is at the very core of broadcasting. That is why my approach to it is so different from Ludovic Kennedy's. It might be said that if I had had more experience of performance and less of administration, I would take a different view. I do not think so. In fact I have had my share of performance in radio though not in television. For many years I broadcast regular political commentaries to Spanish America and have appeared not infrequently in the external and domestic services. Even I have taken part in *Brains Trusts* for France. I will never forget the first question at my first appearance: *Le mysticisme, est-ce que c'est une des plus hautes expressions de l'esprit, ou le commencement du ramollissement mental?* I have never quite forgiven John Weightman, who was in the chair, for turning to me for the first reply. In any case I hope my approach to broadcasting does not savour of *mysticisme*, and, above all, gives no indication of *ramollissement mental.*

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NOTES & TOPICS

Denis Brogan

THE BROGANS came from Donegal, but Denis himself belonged to Clydeside, and he remained deeply attached to this region—generous, for example, to Glasgow University. He originally entered that University in order to read medicine, the subject his parents wanted him to take up. But by the end of his first year he had received only low marks for the papers connected with his main subject, though securing 98 out of 100 (I am told) for a paper that he took in English History. He later traced his interest in America back to the period before he was twelve years old, a period during which he revelled in *The Last of the Mohicans,* Buffalo Bill, and Mark Twain. It happened that he moved from Glasgow University to Balliol at a lucky time, and gained powerful encouragement from Sam Morison, the first Harmsworth Professor of American History in Oxford. With Brogan, however, there were always surprises and paradoxes; and in fact it was Harold Laski who, at the London School of Economics, provided both the stimulus and the patronage for his impressive first book—the treatise on *The American Political System* which appeared in 1933.

Brogan also tells us in one of his articles that, when he was nine years of age, his father took him for a holiday to some village near Donegal; and here, at the house of the local schoolmaster, the boy found the story by Alexandre Dumas called *Twenty Years After*—the work which generated in him a fervour for French history, ultimately leading him into another important field of activity. In the first half of the 1940s, however, Denis's doctor told him that he must cut down his studies by abandoning either France or America; and, after that, he concentrated for the most part on the United States, which he visited very often. At the moment when the need was greater than ever before—greater indeed than it is likely ever to be again—he made it his special task not merely to interpret America to England, but also to explain the English to the Americans.

He claimed that he could read a thousand pages a day, and then would be able to recall practically all that these pages contained. He liked to assist the growth and the shaping of the Brogan legend, however; and I am told that the physiologists regard such accomplished reading as in fact an impossibility. All the same, I wonder a little about the physiologists themselves, and I would be happier if the problem could be solved by the historian rather than the scientist. I am interested also in those people who seem to be able to capture a whole page of reading-matter in a single instantaneous glance. At the finish, I ask myself whether somebody sitting as quiet as a mouse and deliberately watching Denis turn over the pages might not have something to tell us about this particular point. Denis did in fact possess certain uncanny powers. Once, when I went to his room to discuss a piece of college business with him, he managed to go on tapping out whatever it was that he was composing on the typewriter—talking to me at the same time about something else. He said that he was engaged on an article that had to be completed very quickly, so I asked him whether he would be offended if I came up close in order to be able to confirm his statement. In fact he was producing a typical example of that Brogan smudgy typewriting which nobody else of my acquaintance has ever been able to imitate; but he was clearly engaged in the composition of an article—one which, if I remember rightly, had something to do with France. Like a number of people, Denis would often remember where a certain passage actually stood on a page of a book. He once seemed to be suggesting to me that he could also recall the number of the page in question. I would have liked this to be true, but a certain cloudiness in his phraseology at this point left me feeling rather uncertain about the claim.

Still more curious, however, were the things that he forgot. Down to his very last year as an active Professor he would draw me aside after lunch on certain Mondays, asking me very confidentially whether it was the Faculty Board of History or the Faculty Board of Economics that he had to attend that afternoon. He would not only lose his railway ticket or rush off to Southampton without his boat ticket; with calm deliberation he could place an unused transcontinental ticket into a waste-paper basket at the Century Club in New York. Worse still, I happened on one occasion to meet him as I joined a Euston train at Rugby. This time (apart

SIR DENIS BROGAN *died in Cambridge on January 5th at the age of 73. He was a regular contributor to* ENCOUNTER *for twenty years.* SIR HERBERT BUTTERFIELD *was from 1955–68 Master of Peterhouse, where Professor Brogan was a Fellow. He is the author of numerous historical works, including "The Origins of Modern Science" and "The Whig Interpretation of History."*

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from having got into the wrong train at the beginning of his journey) he had bought in Manchester a single ticket to take him back to Cambridge, completely forgetting that he had in his pocket the return half of the two-way ticket that he had purchased at the start of his travels. We celebrated our unexpected meeting at Rugby by—each of us—procuring a generous double-sized ginger-beer. I am slow in the uptake, however, especially as I am a teetotaller who doesn't really like non-alcoholic drinks; and Denis, rapidly disposing of his own supply, absent-mindedly stretched out his hand and drank the whole of mine, before I had taken a sip of it. I suggested that the time had come for our ordering another couple of drinks; whereupon he put on the winsome smile which he sometimes used as a silent confession of guilt. Then he said: "People are mistaken when they think that I am always lusting for alcohol. The truth is that I have a passion for anything that is liquid—I thirst for anything that is wet. . . ."

AND, OF COURSE, HE WAS a great talker—not exactly a good conversationalist, for he was not usually interested in any actual exchange of ideas. If you made a statement or asked a question, this would start him off, but he would take a path of his own—he would be reminded of something which did not quite correspond to the thing you were wanting him to discuss. As he went on, some word of his own would remind him of something more irrelevant still; and he would branch out into an even more unexpected path. And this would continue until he paused for a moment for breath. Then you could intervene and put another penny in the slot—which meant that the same course would be repeated, but with at least a different starting-point. One evening, he told me that, earlier in the day, an ambassador had called on him in London to enquire about some political matter. But the preliminary talking went on so long that the ambassador had to go away without having had a chance to ask the question which was the purpose of the visit. And Denis seemed to think that the joke was against the ambassador. In general, I gather he was even more rapid a talker than Sir Isaiah Berlin. The first time I heard him deliver a paper was at a conference of twelve British and twelve French historians held at All Souls in the latter part of the 1930s. Unfortunately, his contribution had been put at the end of the morning's programme, and as his predecessors had taken more than their fair share of the time, he had only half of the promised period in which to deliver his production—a paper on Louis Blanc, I believe. Unrelentingly he doubled the pace of his talk, and got through the lecture, producing a result, however, that only the Frenchmen could understand. I think that the second time I heard him perform was on the occasion of his Inaugural Lecture in Cambridge in 1945. It seemed as though he now had little idea of the way to lecture from a written or printed text. He finished his performance after 35 minutes (indeed a friend of mine has corrected me this week and told me that it was only 25), and he, who could have gone on improvising for the rest of the evening if he had regarded this as proper, left his audience feeling that they were hanging in the air.

IT HAS SOMETIMES been held that Denis's passion for detail, and his capacity for almost total recall, had the effect of throttling his thinking powers and reducing him to the kind of history that is sheer recapitulation. It is true that he was no great systematiser, and, partly because there was something of the journalist in him, he did not have the time to brood in quietness and achieve long-term results in the way that his great predecessors Tocqueville and Bryce had done. It was almost as though he did his thinking while on the wing, trying to flee from some unhappiness in his own interior. And often in his work it is the single pithy sentence that is interesting—the paradox, the intuitive flash, the unexpected comment. Having, forty years ago, fallen in love with a beautiful American girl, two years of age, and then finding myself the victim of her little treacheries, her intolerable flirtatious-

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ness—the old Eve deeply rooted in her already—I think it warms the cockles of the heart to find Denis pronouncing that "to a cool observer, children are not remarkable for their moral virtues, of which they have few"; and then adding: "they *are* remarkable for the intellectual rigour of their conversation."

I think there is some experience and a certain amount of reflection behind the Brogan thesis that the secular historian tends to make too much of the anti-clerical language which can come from people who in reality are very devout. His command of detail made Denis quite a master of the art of pricking other peoples' bubbles and enabled him to surprise his readers with a host of unexpected correlations between widely separated sorts of data. Harold J. Laski, in his foreword to Denis's first book, *The American Political System,* brings out the significance of the man's command of sheer detail. Laski writes: "Mr Brogan has brought vividly home to me the inescapable fact that it is the minutiae rather than the [broad] principles of capitalist democracy which separate England from America. . . ." The same eye for close detail enabled Denis to study American politics near the ground—entering into municipal politics and ward politics, interesting himself in the ordinary operators in these fields, rejoicing in their earthiness, seeing politics as the tricks these men play on one another. All this—together with his interest in such things as the newspaper comic strips—gave him a feeling of kinship with these people and saved him from being too academic.

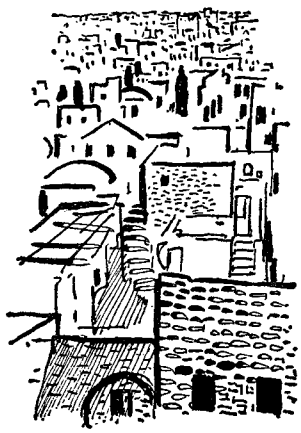
He was no creator of systems, then, and when it came to theory he had no love of the thing in itself, though he might like the gossip about the holder of a theory or the circumstances that had provoked its development. In the Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, he made it clear that "political science" for him had to be the concrete study of fairly contemporary politics. "I am by equipment", he said, "by temperament and by limitations, incapable of changing, of becoming a political philosopher or a philosophical historian." He saw politics, not as an attempt "to meet the specifications laid down by Plato or Hegel", but rather a case of coping with the unpredictable demands of situations created by human wills—these latter, themselves, working on similar recalcitrant materials. The function of the politician, in point of fact, was to improve the world a little, here and there, by measures which might sometimes be anomalous, but, with luck, not too indecent.

YET SOMETIMES THERE WAS too much scintillation, too much cleverness, and many of the writings had a clear polemical intent. He once said that the university teaching of politics would not always be the propagation of new ideas, and it was rather his function to recover traditions of statesmanship that had been developed over the centuries but had been forgotten particularly between 1919 and 1939. Perhaps because he was no system-maker, he knew no better than to stick to what he had inherited, his outer framework of ideas being the mundane underside, the mundane corollaries of Christianity. These are parts of the human outlook that still survive after the element of the spiritual has evaporated out of the system, and on a purely terrestrial point of view they make the "lapsed Christian" almost the key factor in modern history. Denis must have meditated a great deal on these mundane by-products of religion, and he realised that they were due for ultimate extinction, if their ultimate source, the fountain of genuine religion itself, were ever allowed to run dry. He had quite an impressive interest in Christianity itself and noted that however it might be interpreted or watered down, it still insisted on the notion of duty as a call to each individual conscience, and on "the individual's need to lay up treasure in heaven." He draws particular attention to "the failure of optimistic humanism to eradicate evil from the hearts of men." On this side of his work he has some very moving moments, in fact: though he may have failed to bring the whole of his mind into unity with itself.

Herbert Butterfield

Letter from Damascus

By Peter Schmid



THE LEADER of the student group I was to visit was not in his office, but as I was going down the stairs in the rickety old building, through the open doors on the lower floor I saw other students playing ping-pong. "Let's talk to these fellows instead," I suggested to my official guide, and went into one of the clubs. He begged me not to: "You can't do that! We haven't got permission

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from the Ministry, so it is out of the question for you to speak to any of these young people in my presence!"

I was left quite speechless. I had met nothing like it, even in the East Berlin or the Peking of the 1950s. The Syrians take their security precautions to extremes. Abdul, my shadow, was not content to keep his ears glued to all my conversations. He carefully wrote down every single word that was said. Before any official could be interviewed, all the interviewer's proposed questions had to be sent "for approval." I wanted to ask the Minister of Information how and why Syria's position differed from Egypt's on the various questions of a peace settlement. Instead of an answer I got my manuscript back heavily crossed out; only two completely unimportant points remained. In the end my efforts at interviews quietly petered out.

As a journalist in Damascus, you feel like *K*, the surveyor in Kafka's *Castle*. All efforts are thwarted by endlessly absurd red tape invented by anonymous powers above. "If the oyster stays shut," says a Syrian proverb, "the grain of sand becomes a pearl."

HERE THERE IS none of the chattiness of the Lebanese, none of the childish, excitable openness of the Egyptians. Damascus, that "most Arabian of all cities," in spite of the lovely oasis it is set in, is a sad and gloomy place. It has a dark feeling of the underworld about it, and distrust hovers over it.

Nowhere have I seen such an extraordinary number of boot-blacks, all looking like little devils with their hands (and even their faces) blackened and reblackened with polish. For a small coin they shine the filthy boots of soldiers who stand staring stolidly ahead. I watched them move away, and five minutes later the shine was gone again, for it's like walking through an enormous building-site. Everywhere the ancient and picturesque clay walls are being bulldozed, and in their place brutalitarian concrete, cheerfully lacking any architectural merit at all, shoots skywards. Israeli bombers put the local electricity works out of action in the early days of the war, so now the city still closes down at nightfall. The bazaar, which used to do a lively trade till midnight, shuts at five, and people grope through the dim streets towards their unlit houses. The five oil lamps which barely lit the hall of my hotel at the beginning of my stay, disappeared one by one. In the end everyone had to crowd round one single light or take flickering candles on ghostly journeys through the corridors.

An air of conspiracy seems to grow of its own accord in such conditions. "Most businesses prefer intrigue to plain dealing," a Western diplomat said to me. "A little while ago a big entrepreneur was interested in getting a licence from one of our firms. He sent an obscure messenger to me to make certain inquiries. I told him it would be much easier if he came himself. Nothing doing. For months now he has been sending me more, even odder messengers, even though I now no longer receive them. But this goes for politics too. Between friends and associates there is a dark and almost theatrical exchange of conspiratorial covenants. . . ."

Syria's history, particularly in recent decades, consists of a string of military coups, involving nationalistic Ba'th-Socialists, Communists, Nasserists, and groups and splinter-groups forming and reforming into kaleidoscopic coalitions. The main issues appear to be "Arab unity" and "social justice." In 1958 an overhasty union with Nasser's Egypt left havoc. Then came new political priorities—above all, socialism: represented at the end of the 1960s by a triumvirate of left-wing Ba'thists, who had served as doctors in the Algerian war of liberation and were intoxicated with the romanticism of the Guerrilla and the People's War.

Their confiscations and expropriations brought Syria's vulnerable economy to a halt. Today it is picking up again and this seems to be due to Air Marshal Hafez Assad. His picture in civil dress or in uniform looks down from the walls of innumerable offices, schoolrooms, shops, and hotels. He has a pleasant face, and, without the airs of a great leader, his very high forehead gives the impression of intelligence and his massive jaw of strength. In Spring 1970 he overthrew the "utopian-socialists" whom he had formerly supported. He locked them up and replaced them with his own commandos. After that a realistic note reappeared in Syrian politics, and also a new word. Assad's coup was not called a "revolution" (as was usual on these occasions) but a "rectification." It was a kind of "straightening-out."

Before the "rectification," the Governor of Assad's home-province (Latakia) explained to me, "the politicians were alienated from the people by their ideological extremism. Since the rectification we are realising true democracy. . . ." They have changed none of the aims of "scientific socialism", I was instructed: but only the methods by which they hope to attain it. In the past the peasants were awarded expropriated land but forced to offer the produce of it to the state cooperatives (on the East European pattern) at prices which did not even cover their production costs. So they fell into debt and proceeded to flee from the land they had been given. Now, after the "rectification", the Governor could show me communities with fine stone houses which were plain evidence of growing prosperity. (The expert who accompanied me had been trained in Den-

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mark.) These "rectified" communities were now run on the lines of a Western "farmer's co-op," supplying fodder and machines to members, collecting and selling their produce. But the antiquated socialist ideas are still active. In every province there is still always a production commune of the "Kolkhoz" type, which tries hopeful experiments and gathers sad experience. When the peasants had become accustomed to the "first stage" of communal work, I was told, sometime in the future they could use their experience to go "one stage further." A leisurely—and perhaps pragmatic—approach.

A critical and realistic approach is beginning to be adopted in the nationalised industries. In the wild revolutionary years the wealthy owners were thrown out with no compensation, and the directorships and key administrative posts fell into the laps of reliable comrades. The profits in which the workers had been promised their fair share did not quite materialise. Much to the workers' relief, "profit-sharing" was replaced by family allowances, and capitalist incentives were introduced (including piece-work wages and fines for bad workmanship). The capitalists had removed what capital they could and their personal know-how, moving abroad as the crisis worsened (just as they did in Allende's Chile). The new head of state is now trying to tempt them back through liberal investment concessions; whether he will be successful remains to be seen.

Although he allows such things, Left phraseology still fills the air. The Women's, Students', and Youth movements, through which he would like to carry out his "rectification" and establish it firmly with the people, still send delegates to all the Eastern congresses and gratefully accept grants from the "Socialist Bloc." As a woman official told me with disarming frankness, "It's very simple—the West doesn't invite us, so we go East."

IF ONE LOOKS CLOSER at the reality of the Syrian situation one soon sees who are the real powers behind the ex-European theories of class struggle. Here proletariat and bourgeoisie are the poor agricultural tribes from the country from whom (since the old days of the French Mandate) the officers and soldiers were usually recruited, and who took their weapons in their hands and tried to wrest their share of wealth from the merchants in the city. The Left hotheads of the previous régimes were Alawi, Druses, Ismailis, and Kurds. The recent coups ended in a seizure of power by Alawi officers, and they tried to consolidate their power as quickly as possible. President Assad therefore placed an Alawi representative in every ministry, to act as a grey eminence behind the minister. The president also has an 80-man-strong bodyguard recruited solely from members of his own family and village. Educated townspeople seem to resent the power of these rustics, who apparently can be easily recognised by their dialect. This is the real reason for the lack of trust in Damascus, and why the "liberal" realist Assad controls his underlings so strictly.

The camouflage of this painful cleavage has gone so far that "Alawi" has officially become a non-word. When I asked the Governor of Latakia about the Alawi majority in his population, his secretary refused to translate the question. "The Alawi," he informed me, "are an invention of the French colonialists." By fighting at Sadat's side in the recent war which the people had greatly looked forward to, Assad won a popularity magical enough to ease the old tensions, at least for the time being. The Syrian divisions, together with the Moroccans and the Iraqis, suffered such heavy losses in men and equipment that a foreign military expert thought it would take them months to recover their readiness for battle. But the Syrian people did not realise the extent of the disaster and furiously condemned the "treacherous" ceasefire agreed by the "cowardly" Egyptians. As in social matters, the régime can only get itself out of this contradictory position by ambiguities. It is being as stubborn and difficult as possible, particularly in refusing for so long to provide a list of Israeli prisoners in their hands. 20,000 new refugees from the Golan Heights (mostly belonging to the same wretched people who were driven out in 1967 and resettled along the front line) are vegetating with no means of support in school-buildings and mosques. From the start the Red Cross offered to register them and, according to the Geneva convention, arrange for their return as civilians. But, again, their own government would not allow it, just as they prefer to leave Syrian prisoners in Israeli jails without protection rather than ask a friendly embassy to represent their interests with the government of Israel. The old fear still is that such a realistic acknowledgment of facts might entail something like recognition of the enemy. This was the salty explanation I heard in Damascus. "If a Syrian," a resident remarked, "wants to annoy his wife, he cuts off his balls. . . ."

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Foregrounding & Such

The Criticism of Criticism—By BERNARD BERGONZI

TOWARDS THE END of C. P. Snow's *Last Things* one of Lewis Eliot's old Cambridge friends is vehemently lamenting yet one more symptom of decline:

> "You think a bloody sight too much of criticism if you put it as high as second-hand. Our infernal college" (he turned to me) "after we'd cleared out elected some damn fool who'd written a thesis on the Criticism of Criticism. Instead of electing him they ought to have kicked his bottom down the Cury."

That Johnsonian kick, if ever delivered, would have been a dashing example of the Criticism of the Criticism of Criticism, a rare and difficult activity. The kind of impatience it indicates, though, is common enough, expressing a feeling that criticism is a wholly superfluous activity. Such complaints are notoriously common among performing artists, who complain bitterly and often about the spite and blindness of so-called "critics." In fact, they are objecting not to criticism as such, but to unfavourable criticism; the critic is always welcome when he offers praise. One has more sympathy with students of literature who look only for a simple encounter with the text and who regard literary criticism as a needlessly complicated and interfering activity. In a limited way they are quite right; nothing is more destructive in a literary education than reading criticism instead of reading literature. But having admitted that, one adds that criticism is unavoidable, that the act of intelligent reading *is* the critical activity, that a trained response is more rewarding than an untrained one, and that in the end critical reading is social and collaborative rather than solitary. Hence the need to understand the responses of those other and better trained readers that we call critics, not necessarily to agree with them, but to deepen our own response and, perhaps, to experience the challenge of creative dissent.

This line of argument does not always convince the student, who may prefer to persist in the privileged state of solitary reading a little longer, but it usually reassures the teacher. From then on it is a short step to talking about criticism as the common pursuit of true judgment, comparison and analysis as the essential tools of the critic, and criticism as the medium through which the literature of the past is kept alive. But such sentiments, though true, can often seem a little bland, applying a spurious legitimation to the over-production of academic literary criticism. Many of these books are, as Malcolm Bradbury has observed, made to be stored rather than read; they move inevitably from publishers' warehouses to library stacks without ever deeply interesting or exciting or annoying anyone. At best they will be reviewed by other specialists in academic journals, and perhaps gutted or plagiarised by students in search of essay-material. Cynically, one can remark that, if the apparent function of such books is to say something useful about literature, their real function is to provide academic employment or advancement for their authors, increasingly harried by the régime of "publish-or-perish."

The inflation of academic criticism doesn't, of course, imply the uselessness of criticism as such, any more than monetary inflation means that money ought to be abolished. Yet in the face of a growing quantity of pointless books the impulse, whether expressed by bemused students or puzzled general readers or rebellious teachers, to get rid of the whole lot is strong and understandable. In the end, though, it must be resisted, if only to preserve the truly seminal and creative criticism of our time, which necessarily relates the reading of literature to the values and interests of the general culture, whether it is by Eliot or Leavis, or Lionel Trilling or Edmund Wilson. And most of their important criticism was, significantly, published as essays rather than full-length books.

BUT WE LIVE in confusing times, where every thesis calls forth its antithesis, or, to put it more simply, if one person says one thing, then someone else is sure to say the opposite. So that if it is

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a commonly held opinion that criticism is at best a second-hand activity and at worst unnecessary and in need of abolition, there is an opposed view, perhaps less common but more articulately argued, that regards criticism as very important and not, indeed, to be distinguished from so-called creative writing. There is, for instance, the hyper-Leavisian Ian Robinson of Swansea, who, while attacking academic criticism in his recent book, *The Survival of English*,[1] also complains about pupils who, "having concentrated their intelligence and seriousness upon evaluating a writer who matters to them, will refer to their work as mere criticism, as against the real creative thing, the formless verses they toss off at idle moments. . . ." More fashionably, there are the French, for whom Writing is Writing, or rather *écriture*, whatever it is about, whether it describes imaginary figures in an imaginary landscape, or the experience of falling in love, or of reading a poem or novel by someone else.

In the current typologies of academic life, the undergraduate reading literature who is simply troubled and confused by criticism is, as I have suggested, a common figure. But against him, or more often her, one can set a different type, less common, certainly, but increasingly noticeable. This is the kind of highly sophisticated student with a speculative bias, who usually professes Continental allegiances and who is, as he might put it, heavily into critical theory. Such students are, indeed, often more interested in theorising than in carefully responding to a particular literary text. Their choice of literature as a subject can sometimes seem arbitrary; they might have been equally at home with sociology or political theory, though probably lacking the sheer cerebral muscle to cope with analytical philosophy. An uncompromising version of this state of mind was exemplified by some German graduate students I came across who refused to discuss any literary works until the theoretical frame of reference of the discussion had been set up to their satisfaction. If English students wouldn't go as far as this, their ideas might tend in that direction; at least, "theory", so long a dirty word in our briskly empirical climate of thought, has now become honorific in some quarters. These, of course, are the quarters that are most receptive to Continental currents of thought, notably Marxism and structuralism. It would be misleading to pretend that they are, at the moment, anything other than minority tastes. Still, there is a growing inclination to theory and a more speculative approach to literary questions than English academics, reared in an instinctive preference for the practical as against the theoretical, and for the concrete as against the abstract, are accustomed to.

For myself I believe that Marxism is beguiling but ultimately incredible; and that structuralism does not offer a better way of thinking about literature than the Anglo-American tradition that began with Coleridge and was codified in the New Criticism. Nevertheless, the current interest in literary theory can be cautiously welcomed as a sign of intellectual life and self-awareness. Literary theory, has, presumably, as good a claim to exist as political or sociological theory. And by theory I mean something other than the proliferation of academic books on a predictable range of authors: despite the scathing observation of C. P. Snow's character quoted above, the criticism of criticism can be more intellectually challenging than criticism itself. Not, indeed, that I advocate plunging undergraduates into literary theory, unless they express a particular taste for it, and even that oughtn't always to be encouraged. It is rather teachers who may need to bring their habitual assumptions and methods under conscious scrutiny, particularly when faced with alien challenges. There is a real danger that the familiar tools of our critical discourse—"concrete", "realisation", "image", "complexity", "irony", "sincerity"—may be wearing out. It is no use to answer, with a familiar Leavisian response, that the critic doesn't need to be a theorist, that his terms validate themselves in the critical act, when they are understood and accepted by the sensitive reader. Such a shared community of response implies a consensus of value, and that, in criticism as in politics, is no longer to be taken for granted. Some young critics are already adopting a new terminology, derived from unfamiliar intellectual matrices. For instance, I recently examined for an ancient university a doctoral thesis of considerable brilliance, in which the key words were "crisis", "paradigm" and "reification."

SO ROGER FOWLER'S BOOK has appeared at a timely moment.[2] Its title perhaps promises more than it provides; as it happens, the diligent enquirer who tries to look up "crisis", "paradigm" or "reification" will not find them. Nor, for that matter, are some of the more slippery terms of the Old New Criticism, such as "tone", which in my experience can still cause argument and misunderstanding. But Mr Fowler points out in his preface that his dictionary is not meant to be a comprehensive handbook of

[1] See Geoffrey Strickland's review, ENCOUNTER, March 1974.

[2] *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms*. Edited by ROGER FOWLER. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £2.50.

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literary terminology, and he obligingly directs the reader to several standard works that will provide him with basic information. The present book, says Mr Fowler, is intended to "add to and qualify such aids by encouraging a new perspective on literary terminology: to stimulate curiosity about how literary terms work actively for us, rather than to satisfy a utilitarian desire to gain access to their traditional meanings." Fair enough; and despite some omissions the book largely succeeds in its aim of provoking a rational self-consciousness about the critical terms we use; it explores their limitations and potentialities in a way that has some affinity with the methods of linguistic philosophy.

The book is only in a loose sense a dictionary at all, though the label has a certain convenience. It is, rather, a collection of very short articles, each between one and three pages long, on major questions of critical theory, about half of them by academics at the University of East Anglia. A few entries are quite brilliant, notably the one on "Baroque" by Michael Hollington, which in two pages says a great deal about the possibilities and dangers of this word in discussion of architecture and literature. Other articles, though, are merely banal, and one or two are in error: turning up the entry on "conceit", I was saddened to read the assertion that the opening phrase of Eliot's "Prufrock" about the evening "spread out against the sky/Like a patient etherized upon a table" is a modern example of the conceit as it was understood in the seventeenth century. Since I usually spend quite a lot of time in Eliot seminars inviting students to see just how the opening of "Prufrock" is *not* like a metaphysical conceit, I had the sense that somewhere, somehow, a point had been missed.

ON THE WHOLE, though, the entries say useful things sharply and economically. Indeed, their very concision reinforces a claim once made by F. W. Bateson that most books of criticism would be better as articles, and most articles as short notes. I believe that the contributors to Mr Fowler's dictionary, if given several thousand words to spread themselves on their chosen subjects, would have written less effectively. Despite the range of the entries some recurring themes can be detected. One of them is a possible rapprochement between linguistics and literary criticism, a subject in which the editor, himself a specialist in linguistics, has long been interested. Hence the inclusion of a word like "foregrounding" which is, we are told, a free translation of the Czech term, *aktualisace*, "a concept evolved by the pre-war Prague school of linguistics and poetics, under the influence of Russian formalist doctrines, to represent the abnormal use of a medium. . . ." The entry indicates the possible value of this term in literary criticism and then scrupulously describes all the objections to it, so at the end one decides that it isn't much use after all. The editor himself, in the entry on "language", refers to the value of linguistics to criticism in such unassuming terms that one would find it hard to disagree: "the *methodological* benefits from linguistic analysis are likely to be fragmentary rather than systematic, supplementary rather than definitive." Implied debates about language, about how far it is essential rather than accidental to the literary work, can be detected at intervals. The writer on "comparative literature" casually remarks that "the Chomskyan concept of deep structure may offer a new impetus to comparative criticism, since it would seem to facilitate the comparison of works whose surface structures may be dissimilar." The reduction of the dimension of language to a literally superficial "surface structure" is startling: at this point, exceptionally, I felt the need of much fuller explanation and justification.

Again, Peter Mercer, who seems to be a revisionist defender of the New Criticism, ends his piece on "analysis" by conceding the possibility of "structural analysis freed from the trammels of purely verbal structure", invoking Vladimir Propp and Roland Barthes. If there is a deep structure in Mr Fowler's dictionary it may concern a battle between those who wish to refurbish the New Criticism into a new and more usable model, and those who want to bury it and replace it with something completely different. Both sides are inclined to call for aid on the successive Continental schools deriving from Saussure—Russian and Czech formalism, stylistics, structuralism, semiotics—and the struggle remains inconclusive.

On more particular and apprehensible topics there is some agreeably vigorous polemic, notably by Lorna and Victor Sage, a husband-and-wife team from Norwich, who attack critical terms with all the stylish aplomb of McMillan and Wife putting down crime in San Francisco. She takes apart "image", using in passing the word "foregrounded", just to show how it can be done by a skilled practitioner. He makes a detailed and quite damaging onslaught on "fiction", which has lately become a very fashionable word.

Mr Fowler's book is stimulating to dip into and useful to consult. It is, however, likely to leave a bleak impression on many students and teachers of literature, for it marks the End of Innocence as far as critical reading goes. The model reader can no longer be seen as the eager adolescent in love with books described by C. S. Lewis in *An Experiment in Criticism*; nor as the alert, sensitive

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person encountering a poem or novel in a sincere, unmediated fashion, as prescribed by more than one generation of Leavisites. As a brief compendium of schools and methods, Mr Fowler's dictionary confirms the existing tendency for literary study to become more overtly theoretical, with all the losses and gains that that implies. Even so, a mastery of method can never guarantee mastery in criticism. In the end, one has to return to Eliot's early dictum, both daunting and liberating: "there is no method except to be very intelligent."

"...And Gathered into Crowds and was Alone..."

A View of the City—By ANTHONY THWAITE

JONATHAN RABAN'S sub-title (if it *is* his and not his publisher's) seems to suggest something in the urban-ecological-sociological area: "What Cities Do To Us, And How They Change The Way We Live, Think and Feel".[1] Both the inclusiveness and the explanatoriness sound like Mayhew a century-plus on. Reviewers have nibbled round this, several of them chiding Raban on the way for not having turned the whole thing into a novel. Indeed, one part of the book, the penultimate chapter, originally appeared as a short story ("The Foreign Girl") in the June 1973 number of ENCOUNTER. Versions of other chapters that appeared in *The Listener* as broadcast talks looked like pop sociology of a high-grade sort. I noticed sentences here and there (and Raban, in a prefatory note, doesn't attempt to disguise the practice) which originally appeared in, variously, an ENCOUNTER article on "The Unknown Mayhew" (August 1973) and a *New Statesman* reappraisal of Kingsley's *Alton Locke*.

Read in context, all these seem the strategies of a restless mind, sending off scouts to spy out the land and harbingers to announce the arrival of a prophet: Prolegomena to a Work in Progress —or, more nearly, a Book from Jonathan Raban's *Prelude*, on the growth of his own mind. It is, in fact, a work of "managed" autobiography. Like Wordsworth, Raban is sometimes almost embarrassingly open in his confessions and self-revelations; but—also like Wordsworth—he chooses to omit or ignore much of both foreground and background. The biographical note on the back flap, which the publishers in a fit of chagrin have urged us all to take no notice of, with its cheap slicknesses about the author fleeing to London and joining the "media machine", comes precisely from one sector of the metropolitan mind that Raban writes about with fascination and nausea. Such shameless and mindless constructions as "media machine" nowadays penetrate even rural vicarages, but Raban, in the process of emancipating himself from such places, would never use a piece of ready-made vulgarity like that. In Islington or Earls Court, or wherever he is, he is a moralist, who discovers that scruples about language are scruples about life; and *Soft City* is a work of agonised morality and self-appraisal.

This self that confronts the City is chameleon and caddis-worm, changing colour, aggrandising objects and districts; and it tries on masks, a range of *personae* through which different styles and attitudes can speak: the Hampshire schoolboy, scrutinising the uniforms of human beings as he would fish in a stream; the synoptic university lecturer, plotting his way through a series of seminars on "Fiction and the Nineteenth-Century City"; the hard-bitten investigator, with undertones of remembered movie performances; the mid-Atlantic transient, conscientiously belonging nowhere. Often, *Soft City* is *Walden* in reverse; Raban goes to the City to find himself, and he uses all Thoreau's devices of obscuring the time-sequence, sudden emphasis, sudden withdrawal, candour and canniness. At the end of a passage (pp. 70–71) in which he has given a rapid impressionist picture of a day in the life of himself, urban freelance, he begins the next paragraph:

> Everyone has his own rhythm, and I don't know how representative is my own chronic cycle of performances interspersed with stretches of near-complete vacancy. But it does seem to me to be a logical product of the way in which cities make us live in them, of the urban necessity of playing many parts to a succession of short-order audiences.

And ends:

> The invisible man's awful suspicion that, beneath the disguises, there may be nothing there at all, a rind without a heart, a reality of lies, is one that comes disturbingly easily and often to the city dweller.

[1] *Soft City*. By JONATHAN RABAN. Hamish Hamilton, £3.00.

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Chatto & Windus

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It is a book about creating a self out of many selves; and about the busy emptiness and horror that accompany such a process.

Such a book is, of course, vulnerable not only in the way in which it calls forth, at one level, the sort of response one makes to a character in fiction ("Would I like this man?"); it is also vulnerable—again, in a Thoreau-like way—in the aphorisms and judgments it presents as conclusions-from-experience:

> We still find it very hard to face the elementary truth of life in big cities: that in them we are necessarily dependent on surfaces and appearances a great deal of the time, and that it is to surfaces that we must learn to attend with greater sympathy and seriousness. (p. 84)

"The elementary truth"? That surely is the judgment of the shocked comer-in—Augustine arriving in Carthage, or Cowper:

> *In cities vice is hidden with most ease,*
> *Or seen with least reproach.*

Raban rejects, variously, Mumford, Corbusier, and a whole regiment of nameless, faceless urban planners for trying to see the city as something it isn't or trying to make it into something it shouldn't be; but because the book in so many ways is an attempt to impose order on the shifting kaleidoscope of his own selves, the tone often takes on touches of hyperaesthesia. In attempting to cope with the diverse impact of fragmentary sense-impressions, it stutters into shivering lists. Page 91 is a good example of what I mean, where we scoop up in passing

> the different house fronts, the assorted styles purveyed by individual boutiques, the savagely diverse tastes in furniture, in books, in music and painting and eccentric religions . . . .

The *points de suspension* are Raban's, and the speed with which the whole thing goes by (a case of mimetic writing if ever there was one) might make one unaware of the almost puritanical hysteria of "*savagely diverse* tastes in furniture."

THE MATTER OF TONE is part of the whole fabric of the book, which generates (because it comes from) not simply intellectual excitement but emotional excitement. Because of this, because it is a very personal, self-searching book, it can afford to omit the sort of "evidence" we expect in a work of sociology. Not only does Raban ignore large tracts of London, the city which is his main object of focus (he rather comically lists the *terra incognita* south of the Thames); he gives the most cursory glimpses of New York, and has nothing at all to say about huge metropolises which he hasn't presumably visited—Tokyo, Bombay, Cairo—all of which have totally different effects on their inhabitants from those he isolates and throws into high relief in his chosen enclaves of London. Though he is often almost obsessive in his details of some things (clothes, décor, "style" in general), he is silent about others: for example, the *size* of a city. He begins to make some gestures in this direction when he says that Norwich, for example, can be seen in its totality from a high point just outside the city, and that it was this fact that made him want to get away from the place; but he doesn't really develop it. And occasionally his sleight of hand, his making of rapid connections, is so dazzling that he does without logical connection altogether:

> The rise of the industrial city in the nineteenth century coincided with the craze for phrenology and palmistry. (p. 22)

Yes . . . but it also coincided with (for example) the craze for elaborate Valentine cards and for limericks. *Soft City* is full of undistributed middles.

Similarly, large-scale generalisations are wheeled into place and made to fit observations which Raban, in his double role of "isolate" (his noun) and expositor, wants to make:

> To the newcomer who has not learned its language, a large city is a chaos of details, a vast Woolworth's store of differently coloured, similarly priced objects. (p. 59)

So is Benghazi, that overgrown hamlet, to the newcomer who hasn't learned Arabic, or Boulogne to the day-tripper—urban centres which lie far from Raban's apophthegms. He veers between recoiling in disgust at the muddle and messiness of London and embracing the exhilarating chanciness of it, echoing Thom Gunn's "A Map of the City":

> *By the recurrent lights I see*
> *Endless potentiality,*
> *The crowded, broken, and unfinished!*
> *I would not have the risk diminished.*

It's one way of getting Hampshire (or Norfolk or Cumberland) out of your system, while leaving yourself free to sniff out the falsities of Hampstead. For Raban, "cities like New York and London... are as unpredictable, threatening, intermittently beautiful and benign, as a tropical rain forest." They are also "soft" because they are malleable; we mould them to fit our own shape, or we go to the wall. Or we escape to the country —which is what Raban is trying to get away from.

In this solipsist view of London life, much is made of loneliness, the "isolate", men not knowing their neighbours. (N.W.1, with its variant of village life, the middle-class intellectual as commune-dweller, though examined with some queasiness, isn't made to fit this pattern—

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presumably because Raban fancies he feels just as foreign in its nurseries and gardens as he does in his Earls Court bunker.) At times, village life is simplified into caricature; the moment I see the word "rhythms" in this sort of context, I feel that the wheelwright's shop is about to be proffered as symbol of the Good Life:

> . . . we live in a world which is patently not of our own devising, in which we are perpetually baffled and inconvenienced by people we don't know and whom we suspect we wouldn't like. By contrast, the supposedly irrational life of the village seems logical and simple, its causes and effects clear and direct, its patterns of friendship, deference and hostility reassuringly predictable. (Surely a major reason for the passion of the urban middle class to possess country cottages is that, from the perspective of the city, life in the country has a refreshingly basic rationalism—its rhythms, far from being primitive and magical, seem much saner and more straightforward than the perverse and complicated metres of city life.) (pp. 156–157)

This begs so many questions that one gropes irritably for a fistful of answers, or at least rebuttals. From a rich compost of feeling, a few stunted weeds poke through. But really, of course, Raban is intent on creating a more circumstantial, more personal witness to the abrupt, clinical and impersonal concept of the life of civilised, metropolitanised man as Auden saw it:

> *It grew so fast his life was overgrown,*
> *And he forgot what once it had been made for,*
> *And gathered into crowds and was alone,*
>
> *And lived expensively and did without,*
> *And could not find the earth which he had paid for,*
> *Nor feel the love that he knew all about.*

INDEED, AUDEN—the last great "city" poet—seems a congenial spirit behind several of the book's assumptions, though he isn't I think mentioned in a work that learnedly and lightly makes play with dozens of "authorities", from Plato and Augustine to Lionel Trilling and Theo Crosby. Take the last twelve lines of "The Capital":

> *Yet with orchestras and glances, O, you betray us*
> *To belief in our infinite powers; and the innocent*
> *Unobservant offender falls in a moment*
> *Victim to the heart's invisible furies.*
>
> *In unlighted streets you hide away the appalling;*
> *Factories where lives are made for a temporary use*
> *Like collars or chairs, rooms where the lonely are battered*
> *Slowly like pebbles into fortuitous shapes.*
>
> *But the sky you illumine, your glow is visible far*
> *Into the dark countryside, the enormous, the frozen,*
> *Where, hinting at the forbidden like a wicked uncle,*
> *Night after night to the farmer's children you beckon.*

Swinburne

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ROUTLEDGE

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Soft City is a book by one of those farmer's children, with London as the wicked uncle. Its strengths as well as its limitations are provincial—Raban doesn't seem afraid to be seduced or over-impressed, or perhaps he just doesn't know when he appears to be. He is, as I hope I've shown, an extraordinarily complex and unpindownable person, highly self-conscious, sometimes a chatterer, sometimes absurd; perceptive, fascinated by quiddities, a stylist who picks away almost irritably at styles, trying them on and discarding them. I wonder what segment of the Dewey System (or whatever it is they use nowadays) librarians will fit the book into. I suppose it will sit on the shelf with Banham, Crosby, Geddes, Mumford *et al.*, but somehow that isn't where it belongs. In my own mental compartmenting, I see it uneasily muscling in among such heterogeneous companions as St Augustine (not *The City of God* but *Confessions*), Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, and *Walden*: unclassifiable books, full of disarming but sometimes irritating poses, pretending to a tidiness and orderliness they constantly belie, compounded of insight, rapture, common sense and chaos. In fact, very like Raban's picture of the City itself.

Ideas, On Stage & Off

From Rousseau to Marx—By KENNETH R. MINOGUE

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY is much the most difficult kind of history, not because the material is less abundant but because ideas are abstract and do not date in the same obvious way as events. The battle of Waterloo is obviously gone beyond recall, but an assertion like: "Man is born free but everywhere is in chains" can still quicken the contemporary pulse. We respond to the possible truth of the idea; and, truth being timeless, we treat Rousseau as our contemporary. For 18th-century readers, however, such ideas meant something significantly different. Hence it is that the main problem of the intellectual historian is to prevent Rousseau (and any other past thinker) from popping up anachronistically in 20th-century contexts. The problem is to get him back to 1762 and keep him there.

The commonest way of writing intellectual history evades this problem by setting up some abstract distinction, often itself derived from topical intellectual dispute, in terms of which past thinkers may be classified and understood. Progressive and reactionary, organic and mechanistic political theories, Open and Closed Societies, Totalitarian and Liberal Democrats, and similar distinctions have often been used as principles for ordering the thoughts of our ancestors. These distinctions often produce popular and stimulating books, but they usually make for bad history because abstract classification has obliterated genuinely historical considerations right at the very beginning. Dr Shirley Gruner[1] has now provided us with another such scheme, one which traces in French social thought the fortunes of two intellectual tendencies called "economic materialism" and "social moralism."

The theme which she calls "economic materialism" derives from Condillac's doctrine that man is entirely made by his environment. Condillac developed this view by pushing Locke's epistemology to a point that Locke, being a Christian, preferred to avoid. Locke had presented a view of the human mind as a *tabula rasa*, something purely receptive to information. Condillac in effect recognised that one could not attribute original sin to a *tabula rasa*. Man was, he suggested, a statue called to life by the kiss of impressions deriving from the five senses. It is a simple doctrine, and it has turned out to be an influential one. Henceforth, as Kingsley Martin once put it, "The divine gift of grace counted for nothing, and human methods of education for everything." Locke's philosophic doctrine had been transformed into a key to the human situation, which is to say, into an ideology. Man was taken by Condillac to be essentially a pursuer of happiness, but an inefficient one. What this meant to men of the 18th century can best be seen in what the impressionable Stendhal wrote in his Journal:

> "*Presque tous les malheurs de la vie viennent des fausses idées que nous avons sur ce qui nous arrive. Connaître au fond les hommes, juger sainement des événements est donc un grand pas vers le bonheur.*"
>
> Nearly all the miseries of life come from the false ideas we have about what happens to us. Really to understand men, sensibly to judge events, is therefore a large step towards happiness.

One implication of this line of thought was to turn all moral questions into the technical

[1] *Economic Materialism and Social Moralism.* By SHIRLEY M. GRUNER. Mouton (The Hague).

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question of how happiness was to be attained. To argue in this way is, of course, to deal with many of the same questions as those to which religion has generally supplied the answers. It tells us how and why the world is in a radically unsatisfactory condition; but it has a view of the solution altogether different from the Christian answers which surrounded Condillac. Whereas the Christian diagnosis was in terms of original sin and lack of faith, the Condillacian diagnosis was that mankind was suffering the consequences of ignorance. Knowledge had already given men vast powers over nature; here at last was fully explicit the exciting programme of transforming human life itself.

Any one of a variety of academic inquiries might in terms of this project grow into vehicles of salvation, truths turning into saving truths. Condillac had taken off from epistemology. Some of his successors preferred to make physiology, or economics, or psycho-analysis the fundamental science; but all the inheritors of the Enlightenment project equipped some academic inquiry with a theological resonance. Dr Gruner is too concerned with following her theme of economic materialisation to push the matter this far; but some such understanding of Condillac and his contemporaries seems necessary to explain what followed.

DR GRUNER'S SECOND TRADITION stems from Rousseau, and although it appears as the major ancestor of socialism, it is generally referred to here as "social moralism." Rousseau earns his place as the fount of social moralism by insisting upon man's need for a moral transcendence which could find no place either in materialist philosophies such as that of Condillac, or in the society Rousseau saw around him. Man has, on this view, a will, moral sentiments, and what she calls "the longing for good and the sense of moral failure in not striving for it", all of these things being part of his humanity and not depending upon environment and sensation. Indeed, the modern state actually repressed these tendencies by encouraging egoism and greed, and only a more elevated community would be able to draw out these atrophied moral capacities by means of a General Will. It was Rousseau, then, who first drew up in social and political terms that indictment of modern societies which has become a contemporary cliché. The tradition of social moralism which stems from him is as radical in its political effects as Condillac's materialism, but it has very different preoccupations.

There is nothing very new about this contrast, but it is serviceable enough to provide Dr Gruner with the plot of her story. Social Moralism, as represented in the next generation by

A

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Robespierre, enjoyed a political triumph early in the French Revolution, but was discredited with his fall. The *idéologues* developed Condillac's materialism and in the aftermath of Thermidor swept all before them. Although their fortunes subsequently suffered decline, many of their ideas flowered after 1814 in the idea of *industrie*, a vision of society as evolving into a huge co-operative factory in which all members would make their contribution and parasites (such as the aristocracy) would disappear.

> "Industrialism [Dr Gruner tells us] was the end of men's strivings, the state when he will freely exercise his faculties, when he will realise freely his happiness in production, when all men will live peacefully together without war and oppression for it will be the interest of all to be peaceful because their happiness depends upon it."

Yet social moralism managed to sustain itself, partly in alliance with some contemporary Christian ideas, and reconstituted itself among Saint-Simon and his followers. And in the next generation there appeared, as the climax of the story, the young Marx, who jerked sentimental socialism into the course of economic determinism. "Socialism became 'scientific'. It was a victory of the Condillac man over the Rousseau man."

Within the corsetry of this scheme, Dr Gruner manages to be extremely illuminating about the movements of French speculation during the period that concerns her. She is so good on the detail that one cannot but regret the tiered manner of exposition in which French thought appears as a succession of intellectual inventions. Thus the economist Say is credited with introducing the notion of "class" into serious social theory—it had previously been loosely attached to attacks upon idlers and parasites. Destutt de Tracy features as the man who resolved the study of morals into economic impulses; it was Babeuf who took the step beyond criticism of *excessive* wealth to the belief that the actual institution of private property was inherently evil. After 1814, Constant and Thierry arrive to add a historical dimension to this tradition of thought. "It was then merely a matter of time before the new history, now grafted on the new economy, would also be grafted on to the Condillac man." The plant that grew from this grafting was, of course, historical materialism, and Dr Gruner quotes from Charles Comte remarks which any experienced reader will regard as irresistibly prefiguring Marx:

> *"Les moyens que ces peuples sont capables d'employer pour se procurer les choses nécessaires à leur existence, déterminent la forme de leur organisation social."*
>
> The means that people are capable of using to procure what is necessary to their lives determine the form of their social organisation.

By this time, the *idéologue* concept of man elaborated in terms of physiology had begun to be displaced by economics and the study of production. Marx was thus a mere toddler when the French had advanced to the view that "Society has its own laws, it evolves, it moves to its predetermined end whatever man or government does. This is what makes all *political* revolutions senseless for that results only in a change of oppressors." Saint-Simon and his followers were already beginning to use the term "*bourgeoisie*" to refer to the idlers who had stolen the revolution from the people who had actually made it. And finally Marx himself appears, equipped with the sophistication of German philosophy and looking for something that would provide him with a lever on what he took to be reality itself. In fact, Dr Gruner comments, he had broken through not to reality, but merely to "another level of thought—a more commonsensical one, perhaps, but certainly . . . no more real."

So far as intellectual history is concerned, then, this is *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.* We are invited to consider the spectacle of thinkers whose significance revolves primarily around their relation to a largely off-stage Hamlet. But life can be sliced in many ways, and all the thinkers with whom Dr Gruner deals have in other contexts an existence in their own right; they have, indeed, histories in terms of which the Marxian synthesis is but a minor feature. Even within the history of Marx himself, the triumph of the Condillac man over the Rousseau man is not a climax but an episode, and the line of thought Dr Gruner calls "social moralism" merely succumbed to positivist fashion before reappearing in new forms even within Marxism. But to say this is merely to indicate the difficulty of trying to subsume a complicated succession of thinkers under a simple abstract distinction.

Dr Gruner is certainly not uncritical, but she is often critical in an unhistorical way. Hers is historian's *esprit d'escalier*, the contribution to the party made after the lights have gone out and the guests have gone home. She berates Rousseau for thinking that a society can have a will apart from each man's will, and she tells us that "the attempt to apply the new knowledge to society in the same way as the new science was being applied to technology was to my mind a case of misdirected zeal. . . ." These are eminently sensible remarks, no doubt, but they are a contribution to a non-existent discussion. One of the things we purchase by death is that our zeal, even our misguided zeal, is water under the bridge; it has gone by. Historically speaking, the dead don't make mistakes: they merely reveal themselves.

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"Embusqué Havens"

New Poetry—By DOUGLAS DUNN

ROY FULLER'S CAREER as a poet has been one of frequent overtakings by public taste. In poetry, this is particularly galling when one realises that by "public" very few people indeed are involved—a crowd of nay-sayers and yea-sayers standing, glass in hand, on the peripheries of writing, neither audience or participants, but the nearest poetry gets to a "public."

In the 1930s, Fuller was insufficiently brilliant in comparison with MacSpaunday, as well as humbly provincial in that last exclusive Oxbridge decade. His name appears to have lapsed in the 1940s as if itself remaindered, overshadowed by midgets who followed in Dylan Thomas's footsteps, making what now appear controversial marks look like the prints of Seven League Boots. In the 1950s, the Movement—all, with the exception of Larkin, lesser poets—pinched his headlines; and in the 1960s glamorous arrivals achieved the same, in a context heightened by new journalistic coverage of the field, so that what, like Geoffrey Grigson, he might have felt entitled to expect, swam past him at Olympic speed doing a stroke he never knew had existed, let alone been declared legal by a new generation of entrepreneurs who were laying down the definitions.

If an examination of Fuller's career is a particularly bracing way of approaching the fortunes of poetry since about 1936, his recent work, apart from its own merits, is externally useful only as a starting point for an examination of contemporary poetry by those who are already sufficiently old or disenchanted to feel that the entire future of literature is in the hands of obvious wastrels.

For Mr Fuller has pensioned himself off from the world and become a Horatian. Still, it can be said in his favour that he is not one of "the British branch of the family" as defined by Auden, being neither obliged to the Maecenas of the Anglican Church, nor an organist in a trollopish English town. But, as Auden continued to say in "The Horatians",

> *in all*
> *labyrinthine economies*
>
> *there are obscure nooks into which Authority*
> *never pokes a suspicious nose,* embusqué *havens*
> *for natural bachelors*
> *and political idiots,*
>
> *Zoological and Botanical Gardens. . . .*

For many years Mr Fuller succeeded in combining the life of writing—novels as well as poems—with life as solicitor to a large Building Society. And now he has retired to his gardens, with what appears like Augustan inevitability. Yet for years one had lived with the impression that Mr Fuller was something of a left-winger; and it was this person whom one had admired as the Auden Auden left behind on native soil to protect the verse forms and the (vaguely) left attitudes Auden dumped into the Atlantic, or ditched in that dive on 52nd Street. Instead, the entire pattern of Fuller's career is like that of a man who has had one of the keys to the labyrinthine economy and refused to let it go; his obscure nook was liberalised into nothing more than a cushioned corner in which art could be comfortably made, and in which the elegant features of that art would at least look elegant rather than display the exaggerated counter-refinement of much contemporary poetry whose authors deplore the lethargic acceptance by the many of off-hand, free forms engendered by ideas of counter-culture.

There is a good deal too much comfort to our British cultural society. Warning us, in an uncollected poem, not to take him too seriously as "the bird poet", Fuller says

> *he thought himself the poet of birdless or*
> *Simply mechanical-canaried emperors,*
> *Warning of the doom both of winged and wingless*
> *fry.*

In these lines, Fuller imitates the circumlocutions of later Auden; and what is usually meant by "warning" is dissipated by a self-consciously witty idiom, which comes across as an unattractive and unproven knowingness.

Whatever political measure Fuller's poetry attempts to live up to, both its comprehensiveness and its incision suffer from a continually elegiac tone. In "One September", for example, he asks,

> *What is that late bird, the blackbird, doing*
> *Chuckling alone in leaves inked on the West?*

To some extent, these lines contain almost the whole of Fuller's cultural summation. They are, or can be, loaded with possible interpretation. The poet, "that late blackbird", is seen as someone threatened if not yet obsolete; who sees himself as alone in a declining culture; who pads

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his suburban garden with careful footsteps as if aware that at any moment an incautious thought of his might dispatch forever the detritus of a pastoral tradition, the tradition of walking in fortunate gardens.

POETRY HAS, for Fuller, always been an instrument for reflection, for the making of reservations. In "Reading Poems by Brecht", he communicates a fear of continuity, lessening in quality—continuity not as a fact of possibilities, but as the probabilities of loss and disaster—

Looking up, for a moment
I think our dangers over—
What I feel about the age
Having all been said.

With a heavy heart
I return to actuality:
Nothing changed for the better,
Even what's been said
To be said again, certainly worse.

Historicist speculations involving the word "certainly" are difficult to accept. Fuller's attitudes, in relation to the cultural West, are like those of Orwell in *1984* in relation to a political future. Yet Fuller's work does seem to imply the superiority of a curiously English passivity—it is better to lament all declensions than do anything to halt them. As far back as 1943, in a poem "Upon a Revolutionary Killed in the War", he wrote

Actions can only kill:
Let his epitaph be a word.

Intellectually suited for a more vigorously political poetry, but temperamentally unprepared to run its risks, Fuller opts for a concern with art itself, through which he can express his larger attitudes. *Tiny Tears*[1] is a meditation on the frailness of the body and the intellect, the battle for life and art, of

art and lung that fight in vain
Their lovers, bacillus and pain.

In "Homage to Balthus" he notices that the accidents of reality, though the material for artistic order refuse to be efficiently transposed into art on the terms of natural and social order—

Noble artist, it cannot be
the absence of strange intimations
in a wide reality that you
lament but the eternal refusal
of pigment, canvas, brush to make
a world parallel to blind creation
and replace that with its order.

Fuller's distinction in *Tiny Tears* is not in doubt. His craft, his insistence on intelligibility as a criterion of beauty are not only his standards as an elegantly aggrieved member of the rear guard, but rewarding tenets in his own practice. There is nothing quite as good as "Those of Pure Origin", which is one of the finest poems of the 1960s, though both his title poem and "Georgic" aspire to that quality. He has worried too much about the future; and in such a way that his younger contemporaries, inclined to be on his side, might take offence, given the fair run for his money Fuller has enjoyed in both his careers.

To conserve retrospectively defined principles of craftsmanship, while yielding nothing in contemporaneity of subjects, is a typical state of mind among poets of middle-age or older. Largely due to the richness of our literary inheritance, as well as reaction to younger writers who have scant respect for it, the state of mind has an effect of creating an impasse in matters of technique. Why should our respect for traditional moves and methods always be one of preservation by imitation? Even a dog shakes the water off its back when it comes out of the river. Yet it enjoys swimming, and goes back again and again.

THERE IS A CONNECTION—tenuous, and difficult to specify—between this rigorous application of standard craftsmanship, and the fact that a poet such as Roy Fuller leans back so casually on his warning of the improbability of improvement in poetry as in life; and, on the other hand, the fact that a poet such as Vernon Scannell writes so much about losses, defeats and disappointments. *The Winter Man*[2] opens with "Comeback", a story of a former boxing champion's attempt to stay at the top. The footwork of Scannell's iambic monologue can always be spotted in advance, and on this form one is likely to believe that Scannell, who boxed himself, walked into a few right hands in his day. The story is reminiscent of Marcel Aymé's prose parable of the racing cyclist who goes on and on through his years, losing wife, possessions and sanity, on a bike that sheds its tyres, gears, paint and brakes. Scannell, a poet, should have been able to take us farther into the strangeness of sporting psychology. His knowledge of the subject is complete, but the story he tells is too close to a *typical* story, a real story, and not close enough to the mysterious parable it was probably intended to be. Lack of skill cannot be blamed for this, for Scannell delivers his lines with assurance, almost, it could be said, with pride. But his orthodox techniques impose

[1] *Tiny Tears.* By ROY FULLER. André Deutsch, £1.50.
[2] *The Winter Man.* By VERNON SCANNELL. Allison & Busby, £2, paper £1.

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limitations which his kind of skill, his kind of story, cannot transcend.

Originality within styles requiring absolute prosody, near prosody, and stories, can only be tentative unless new things are being said. Scannell frequently does say interesting things about the state of being alive—what, in a previous review, I called moral originality—but for the most part his conclusions arise from a critical humanity, which need not necessarily be poetic or original.

AT THE OTHER EXTREME, for instance in Rodney Pybus's *In Memoriam Milena*,[3] technique can be reduced to an art of saying, an idiom rather than a style. Organisation takes the form of distributing thematic parts and episodes for effect, rather than of lines and stanzas.

Pybus's concentration appears to be on his material rather than on whatever impressive artistry he can make from it. His necessity to say something about the conditions on which art survives the dilemmas and cruelties of history, the tyrannies and excesses civilisation both encourages and resists, is generated by an awareness of their contemporary existence. The subject is topical through our interest in European poets such as Brecht, Herbert, Sachs, Celan, Popa, Holub, Biermann, Bobrowski and so on—in fact, the entire tradition of 20th-century European letters after 1914. If the private wing of extremist poetry is American and British, its public and historical version is to be found in these poets, from Mayakovsky onwards. So Pybus's subjects are European—Kafka's mistress Milena Jesenska, Zamyatin, Dostoevsky—or from the ancient world, Petronius and Procopius.

Pybus clearly feels that his ironies and observations on the nature of literature in bad times are pertinent to the present day. Undoubtedly, they are; yet, in our present literary climate, it is demanded of a writer that when he deals with issues of freedom he should have the courage to concentrate on contemporary oppressions. Otherwise, as in Pybus's case, the reader might find himself confronted with poeticised literary biography. In this example, Milena Jesenska speaks from Ravensbruck—

[3] *In Memoriam Milena*. By RODNEY PYBUS. Chatto & Windus, £1·25.

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I always told you
two hours of living were better
than two pages of writing

Now that I hear
the screams
from an abattoir for girls

and think of just one page
of your letters

I do not know, Franz

I do not

Kafka's nightmare vision is realised in the misery of one whom he had loved. Milena's strength is shown by her continued affection for Kafka, memories of their prolonged and unsatisfactory affair recollected with bitter irony as "spiked like barbed wire with pain." Kafka's negative sexuality is mourned as an inhuman restraint, and his character along with the nature of his writing is seen as somehow implicated in the camps. Art and love for the artist survive in the reality of the horror they seem to have predicted—though this is a controversial interpretation of Kafka.

In "Homage to Zamyatin", Pybus laments the fate of a writer who becomes the victim of the Revolution he had helped to create. Not enough information is given about Zamyatin's career as a political activist—for instance, he is said to have agitated among the sailors who mutinied on the *Potemkin*. Nor are we told much about Zamyatin's activities in the 1920s, although it is by comparing his struggle with the RAPP and the Writers' Union that the similarity between Zamyatin's predicament and that of Solzhenitsyn becomes evident. *We*, for example, was not published in Russian, but in English (1924) and in Czech (1927). There are passages in the poem, however, which cleverly echo, with the sort of irony Pybus is fond of, passages of Zamyatin's own writing. As Zamyatin dies in exile in the Paris of 1937,

at seventy-eight revolutions
a minute
Mussorsky's Boris Godunov
on the gramophone
finally was all
that moved

—lines which recall Zamayatin's essay "On Literature, Revolution, Entropy and Other Matters," where he wrote:

> Revolution is everywhere, in everything. It is infinite. There is no final revolution, no final number. The social revolution is only one of an infinite number of numbers.

Niceties of irony, sardonic strength, and a toughness of intellect which, for the most part, call states into question, are inadequate assets in a poetry which clearly wants to be positive as well as discriminating. Intellectual passion is rare in recent poetry; and if Pybus can extend his interests beyond the problems of literature itself where they now chiefly rest, an important poetry could be the result.

JOHN MOLE HAS a talent for achieving the interaction of thought, or observation, and language, but although he can startle with an image plainly stated—

pram-tracks
in vanishing dew

he lacks as yet a mature consistency of technique, and has no unifying thematic purpose or obsessive view of life with which to pull the various threads of his work together.[4] His adaptations from the French of Robert Desnos—"Six Chantefables"—are delightful, something that might have been written to be sung in a night-club for children. Mole's dexterity in these poems is far more impressive than his mouldy-fig treatment of jazz history in iambic tetrameters which comprises the "Two Verse Letters to Tim Blanning." Yet in poems like "Beer Cans" or "Prairie" he can be effortlessly original, producing a fragile lyricism which is entirely convincing.

Pybus, in the poems towards the end of his book, writes of "the earth-mother", the gardens of Blake and Palmer, and the interference of man with nature in the North of England. An intellectual approach of that sort is denied by John Ormond[5] and Leslie Norris,[6] both from Wales, whose approach to nature is conducted through the idea of place.

ORMOND'S KIND OF POEM is essentially that of the "sung short story", a phrase used by John Bayley to describe certain poems of Hardy and Auden. One of my own concerns is why both the short story and prose poem are undeservedly neglected by British writers. Ormond's "My Grandfather and His Apple-Tree" is a splendidly-achieved narrative; and as I read the poem again and again, I convinced myself that Mr Ormond was cheating. He was denying prose its rights, although in contemporary prose Ormond might have found it more difficult to continue recalling his neighbours and characters

[4] *The Love Horse*. By JOHN MOLE. Peterloo Poets (E. J. Morten), £1.25.
[5] *Definition of a Waterfall*. By JOHN ORMOND. Oxford University Press, £1.25.
[6] *Mountains, Polecats, Pheasants*. By LESLIE NORRIS. Chatto & Windus, £1.25.

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in these affectionate portraits. Poetry is always glad of something to regret—the passing of old-timers, those splendid fellows the like of which we shall not etc. etc. In prose, I'm convinced, this would *look* indulgent and wrong. In poetry, it just reads as something sad, regionally robust and rather homely. And there is a good deal of this in contemporary verse, especially from areas of the country in which blatant and often stupid transformations are being perpetrated.

It is when he is being descriptive that Ormond transcends nostalgia.

> *Then mist,*
> *The silencer, happens into grey,*
> *Mist variously impaled upon the land*
> *Subtracts the pulse of colour.*

These lines are more evocative of the credible mysteries of landscape than "Definition of a Waterfall" which is upheld as a complex symbol of inconstancy and continuity, a solicited pathetic fallacy which natural phenomena have the strength to reject. "One man's waterfall," as Lord Byron might have said, "is another man's piddle."

IN HIS POEM "Moondaisies", Leslie Norris says of flowers that they are "more candid than any words"; and that they are "common as hope." Nature poetry can lead a writer to obsessive affiliations with flora or fauna or landscapes that frequently appear as denials of less comfortable, or more comfortable, realities. For nature poets like to have it both ways. Nature, they say, is more beautiful than people or their cities, more relaxed, cleaner, more reliable, a magnificent consolation where that does not exist in life; or nature is said to be more primitive, more rewarding of affection than deracinated mankind whose present history seems so dull—and both Ormond and Norris have a certain amount of fondness for that, writing as they both do about standing stones and a resonant primitive or medieval past.

One readily admits the difficulties facing a poet who feels he has to be a "nature poet." Nature, and its preservation, has become a political issue, part of the globe's concern for itself in the face of unreasonable exploitation. Yet the real difficulty, as far as writing poems is concerned, is that Nature is a man-made concept that only exists because men's minds say it does. And as every student of literature knows, the concept has undergone remarkable changes in its time, many of them promoted by fashion because the sight and experience of Nature is pleasurable. Recognised by a process of contemporary mind against a tradition of thinking and feeling about landscapes and creatures, Nature is one of the

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most powerful of all ideological subjects in poetry. Those who attempt nature poetry, however, do so without having a current philosophy of Nature to lean back on; or, rather, they lack understanding or sympathy for Science and its methods, and it is likely to be there that freshly conceptualised ideas of the natural world, and man's place in it, are to be found.

It is against a background such as the entrenchment of poetry in a previous tradition of thought about Nature that Leslie Norris's poem "Mountains Polecats Pheasants" has to be seen. It is elegiac, regretting the mortality of creatures and places before the encroachment of machines such as the motor car, which, in the poem, replace polecats as killers of pheasant. Norris's poem is reminiscent of William Stafford's American version of the subject in "Travelling Through the Dark." But the attitude is familiar in any case, from society as well as literature. Nature poets, and others concerned with countryside and animals, become the guardians of wildness. They seek to preserve what is accidental and given. It is unremarkable that ideas of age and origin and accident should be involved in a description of natural beauty; or that Norris should write that

The wind
Over my shoulder
Blows from the cold of time,

attempting not only to dramatise the rudimentary presence of the elements as ongoing, but, in a poem about cromlechs or dolmens, mystifying the permanence of the past. For it is the fault of contemporary nature poetry that it springs backward in thought too easily, uttering a global nostalgia. And this is an intellectual and human fault. It represents a state of mind which finds it too difficult to work within existing society, and by doing so contribute to its change.

AGAINST THAT, I cherish Thom Gunn's lines from the other extreme, which end his poem "In Praise of Cities." Of the Whore of Cities, manifest in Charing Cross Roads and 42nd Streets, he writes,

Here she is loveliest;
Extreme, material, and the work of man.

Not true, perhaps, if one considers the abdication of politics for the sake of exhilaration; but it is the "work of man" which has, in any possible world, primacy.

AUTHORS

William Trevor's latest book of short stories was *The Ballroom of Romance*. His novel, *Elizabeth Alone*, was published by Bodley Head last autumn. . . .

Natalie Herzen's letters take us, in Joseph Conrad's famous phrase, into "the heart of darkness"—plots, conspiracies, intrigue. The daughter of Alexander Herzen, the greatest Russian revolutionary idol of his day, inherited her father's prestige among the anarchist plotters of the 19th century. Here, in Natalie's private diaries, Michael Bakunin's troubled reflections on insurrection in Europe, Sergey Nechayev's ventures in prevarication, seduction and murder (and these in their day formed the plot of Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed*) is fascinating new information. It has been collected, edited and now published in English for the first time by **Michael Confino** (Professor of Russian History at the University of Tel Aviv). These are excerpts from his book, *Daughter of a Revolutionary: Natalie Herzen and the Bakunin/Nechayev Circle*, shortly to be published by Alcove Press (U.K.) and Library Press/Open Court (U.S.A.). . . .

Max Beloff is Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, and a Fellow of All Souls. He is a frequent contributor to ENCOUNTER, and his most recent articles include "Bohlen's Cold War" (November 1973), "George Kennan" (April 1973), and "The Legacy of De Gaulle" (July 1972). . . .

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Kenneth R. Minogue is Reader in Political Science at the London School of Economics. He is the author of *Nationalism* (1967) and *The Concept of a University* (1972), published by Weidenfeld. . . .

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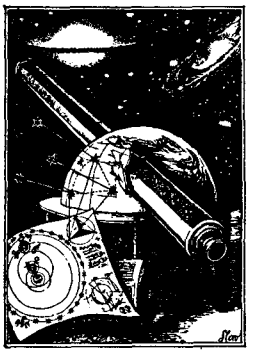
SCIENCE

The Mainsprings of Discovery

The Great Tradition—By GERALD HOLTON



SCIENCE TODAY is under a sort of siege from some parts of the general public. A recent issue of a widely read news-weekly proclaimed that it has found a "deepening disillusionment with science and technology," and diagnosed that on a "philosophical level, the reversal is the result of a new mood of scepticism about the quantifying, objective methods of science." New books that declare the supposed philosophical evil of science (above all, its "rationality") in florid counter-culture language are sure to be spread about by the book clubs and the paperback houses, and to give courage to those who look for popular reasons for decreasing the support for scientific research.

Nor are the responses to such barrages always inspiring. Thus a new report by physicists on the state of their field refers briefly to what it calls "the alleged public disenchantment with science", and warns darkly that the very discussion of the matter "serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Caught in this crossfire, one's mind travels back to that staunch disciple of Copernicus, Johannes Kepler. Writing from Linz in October 1626 to Guldin, he tells what life was like when the peasants laid siege to the town. As luck would have it, Kepler (who was the local official mathematician) had been given an apartment in the County Hall, located in the city wall, with a fine view of the outskirts. Consequently (as he writes) when the war reached the town

> "a whole company [of soldiers] descended on our house. Constantly the ear was attacked by gunfire, the nose by foul smoke, the eye by the flash of firing. All doors had to be kept open for the soldiers, who through their going back and forth ruined sleep by night and my studies by day."

Precisely in these terrible circumstances, Kepler concludes, he raised his eyes above the battle to the astronomical heavens, and settled down to work. How well this image describes our temptation today!

Could we perhaps take comfort from the fact that so far, despite the attacks, the quantity and quality of scientific work today seem better than ever before? Consider the most recent meeting of the American Physical Society in Washington, D.C., the biggest meeting in its history. A good fraction of the nearly 50,000 physicists in the U.S.A. was at hand. Over 1,200 papers were presented. In one session alone I noted that each of the 10-minute papers had 13, 18, 19, 22 or 26 listed authors; and one paper is announced simply as a collaboration of 3 universities and 2 national laboratories. This was no "silent spring." And some of the new research results were nothing less than exhilarating.

We know that the cycles of anti-scientific agitation have come and gone away before. The phrase "the bankruptcy of science" characterised a widely fashionable tendency of attack around the turn of the last century—and in the very middle of it came the discoveries of X-rays, Radioactivity, the Quantum theory of radiation, and Relativity. Similarly, the publication of the

GERALD HOLTON *is Professor of Physics at Harvard University, and author, among other works, of "Science and the Modern Mind" (1958) and "Science and Culture" (1965); he was Editor of "Daedalus" from 1958-61.* *His lecture was presented at the Smithsonian Institution-National Academy of Sciences symposium on the 500th anniversary of Copernicus's birth, and will appear with other papers given on that occasion in "The Nature of Scientific Discovery", edited by Professor Owen Gingerich, to be published by the Smithsonian Institution Press later this year.* *Acknowledgement is due to Miss Helen Dukas and the Estate of Albert Einstein for permission to cite Einstein's writings.*

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essay of Babbage on the *Decline of Science in England* (1830) was followed within a year by Faraday's discovery of electromagnetic induction and, with it, by the start of a whole new science. Examples of this sort can be cited all the way back to Plato, who was determined to eradicate science in reaction against the Democritan tradition, but who himself (as Sosigenes tells us) launched the quest for astronomical explanations that led to the work of Ptolemy and hence to Copernicus.

AND YET, WE CANNOT smugly turn our backs on the current controversy concerning the place of science in national and intellectual life. At the very least, we have to ask ourselves what the conditions may be that conduce to the strengthening or weakening of science. I shall steer away from questions of funding, or manpower, or the politics of science, and other such issues that have been debated often enough. I want to concentrate instead on the precious centre of scientific work, the nature of the process of scientific discovery. And, to begin with, I want to sketch some features of this process which, it seems to me, must be preserved and strengthened at this time of external and internal stress, if science is to continue to flourish.

IT IS NOT UNDERRATING the work of the few sociologists and psychologists who have interested themselves in this question to say that the state of knowledge about what happens in the minds of people as they do "new science" is far from satisfactory. Most of the studies made so far are chiefly applicable to the oldest of the three overlapping phases through which modern science has passed, *i.e.* to the heroic achievement of individuals such as Copernicus—rather isolated, working over decades on one great problem, at most weakly related to other contemporary scientists, or, for that matter, to the social conditions within which they do their individual work. Stage Two, characterised by collegial relationships, came with the rise of the *Accademia dei Lincei* and its cousins, bringing greater interaction with collaborators and with social institutions, greater use of instruments, eventually a greater flow of fairly direct applications issuing from basic speculations.

In Stage Three we have reached "strong coupling." I am thinking of the intense collaboration in industrial laboratories, and equally of the exhausting and exciting interactions between Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, Wolfgang Pauli, Max Born, Erwin Schrödinger *et al.*, or in Rutherford's and Fermi's laboratories. I am thinking of the multiple and interdisciplinary interactions that were at work during the unfolding of the Watson-Crick model of DNA; of the 26 authors whose collaborative paper was read at the last American Physical Society meeting; and, to some degree, of most of the rest of us doing science today. Not only each of the individuals, but also an organism composed of individuals, seems to be doing research. While happily there are at this time also Stage 1 and Stage 2 populations at work, the major new trend is to interactive groups, strongly coupled to the rest of the profession and to society at large, to a research style that in some sense is as far from the Copernican model as modern, technological agriculture is from paleolithic food-gathering.

As the spectrum of processes of "science-making" changes—and we have by no means reached the end of these changes—one necessarily encounters new questions. How adequately have the mental processes of the individual's share in discovery been adapting in the face of intensified coupling? How fragile are the ecological links within the science community, and between science and its macro-environment? And, to specify the question which I shall be chiefly concerned with in what follows: What particular characteristics of the process of scientific discovery (though first developed long ago in science at Stage One) may be essential today both for the understanding and for the protection of the creative potential of contemporary science?

A Model for Scientific Reasoning

THE STUDY of the ways scientists think has not been marked by a cheerful collaboration on the part of its subjects. Until fairly recently, scientists were reluctant, almost embarrassed, to be introspective or observant about what Albert Einstein called their own "personal struggle" during the process of discovery. In his recent book entitled *Induction and Intuition in Scientific Thought*, Sir Peter Medawar correctly observed:

> "Scientists are usually too proud or too shy to speak about creativity and creative imagination; they feel it to be incompatible with their conception of themselves as 'men of facts' and rigorous inductive judgements. The role of creativity has always been acknowledged by inventors, because inventors are often simple unpretentious people who do not give themselves airs, whose education has not been dignified by courses on scientific method."

Until recently, philosophers of science have also preferred not to be involved. For most of them, Hans Reichenbach's dictum was typical:

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> "The philosopher of science is not much interested in the thought processes which lead to scientific discoveries . . . that is, he is interested not in the context of discovery, but in the context of justification."

Even the few scientists who *are* sympathetic to an analysis of the context of discovery often used imagery that shows how sceptical they are of finding ways of understanding it. Thus Max Born wrote,

> "I believe that there is no philosophical high-road in science, with epistemological signposts. No, we are in a jungle and find our way by trial and error, building our roads behind us as we proceed."

The chief result of this attitude has been to discourage the study of this "jungle." Happily, the situation has recently been changing for the better. It has become more common for working scientists—and indeed for the best of them—to allow themselves to be interrogated by well-prepared and sensitive historians, psychologists, and sociologists of science; and to save and make available their drafts, notes, research apparatus, personal scientific correspondence, and other documents. They have begun to realise that they have a serious duty, both to current scholarship that depends on their cooperation and to the writing of the contribution of science to contemporary culture.

What has been found so far? Virtually every one of the few modern studies of scientific thinking has shown that it still relies on some variant of the centuries-old hypothetico-deductive scheme, whether we look at children or established scientists of genius, or the 95% of all scientific work which is of the run-of-the-mill, "Research & Development" type. To put into bold relief some of the essential features of the process at its best, we can use the searching, personal testimony of a man in the class of Copernicus as a starting point.

EINSTEIN DISCUSSED HIS VIEW on the nature of scientific discovery, and of theory construction in particular, on several occasions, notably in his essays "Motives of Research" (1918), "Physics and Reality" (1936), and "Autobiographical Notes" (1946). However, he gave what was perhaps his clearest and most succinct presentation of his thoughts on scientific reasoning in a letter (written on 7 May 1952) to his old friend Maurice Solovine. Einstein began this portion of the letter by explaining that Solovine had misunderstood certain of Einstein's previous statements concerning epistemology. Einstein apologised, and asserted: "I probably expressed myself badly. I view such matters schematically thus. . . ."

There followed a diagram (*Figure 1*)—not entirely surprising. As we know from Einstein's autobiography and many other evidences, he preferred to think visually. Einstein went on to explain:

> "*(1)* The *E* (experiences) are given to us [represented by the horizontal line along the bottom of the figure]. *(2) A* are the axioms, from which we draw consequences. Psychologically the *A* rest upon the *E*. There exists, however, no logical path from the *E* to the *A*, but only an intuitive (psychological) connection, which is always 'subject to revocation' [disavowal]."

We note that this point is one of the most persistent methodological remarks of Einstein. Even in 1918, when he was still doing his best consciously to toe the positivistic line, he wrote:

> "There is no logical path to these laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them . . . there is no logical bridge between phenomena and the theoretical principles."

Later, going beyond even this, he wrote that the axioms are "free inventions of the human intellect" (Spencer Lecture, 1933, and similarly in many of his letters). To return to the letter to Solovine:

> "*(3)* From the *A*, by a logical route, are deduced the particular assertions *S*, which deductions may lay claim to being correct. [As he had said in his Spencer Lecture: "The *structure* of the system is the work of reason."]

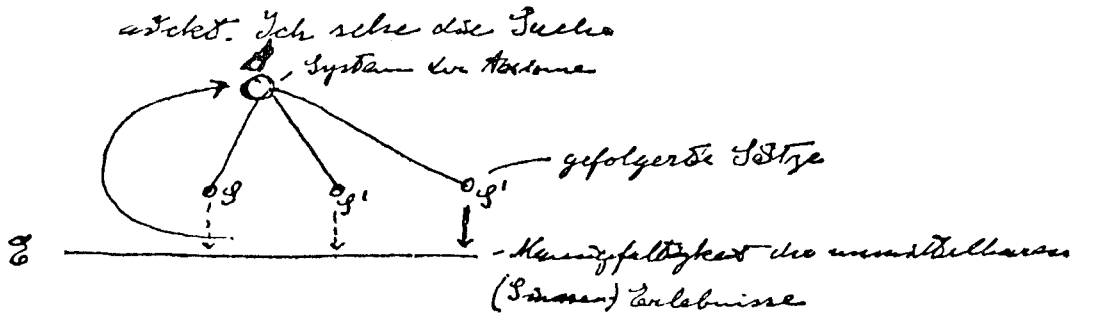

Figure 1

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"*(4)* The *S* are referred [or related] to the E (test against experience). This procedure, to be exact, also belongs to the extralogical (intuitive) sphere, because the relation between concepts that appear in *S* and the experiences *E* are not of a logical nature. [In his "Reply to Criticisms" (1949) Einstein elaborated on this point: The distinction between sense impressions or experience on one hand and ideas or concepts on the other is a necessary distinction, regardless of the reproach that using it makes one "guilty of the metaphysical 'original sin.' "]

"These relations of the *S* to the *E*, however, are (pragmatically) much less uncertain than the relations of the *A* to the *E*. (For example, the notion "dog" and the corresponding experiences). If such correspondence were not obtainable with great certainty (even if not logically graspable), the logical machinery would be without any value for the comprehension of reality (example, theology).

"The quintessence is the eternally problematic connection between the world of ideas and that of experience. . . ."

Now let us suppose that a connection *can* be made between the prediction *S* and the experiences *E* that are at hand. Does this constitute an adequate test of the theory being examined? Einstein discussed this question in his "Autobiographical Notes." At least in the case of the grand theories of greatest interest to him—those whose "object is the totality of all physical appearances"—he asserted that comparing the predictions of a theory with experiment is but one of *two* criteria according to which one can "criticize physical theories at all."

THE FIRST CRITERION is that of "external confirmation." This is the easier one to meet, since one can often ("perhaps even always") make an adequate connection by suitable *ad hoc* "artificial additional assumptions." Moreover, he phrased this criterion in a remarkably generous way: "The theory must not contradict empirical facts." This is, of course, very different from the much stronger injunction we usually associate with scientific "confirmation" by empirical test. Just how faithfully and effectively Einstein followed this first criterion was shown repeatedly, *e.g.* in Einstein's steadfast and unswerving adherence to his ideas when, from time to time, evidence came which purported to show that his predictions, while not in unambiguous flat *contradiction* to the "facts of experience", at the very least were not being *supported* by experimental test.

Going on to the second criterion, Einstein explains that it "is concerned not with the relation to the material of observation, but with the premises of the theory itself, with what may briefly but vaguely be characterised as the 'naturalness' or 'logical simplicity' of the premises (of the basic concepts and of the relations between these which are taken as a basis)." Here is a clear place for individual aesthetic or other preferences—although as soon as this is raised, Einstein feels he, too, has to apologise a little for it:

"The meagre precision of the assertions contained in the last two paragraphs I shall not attempt to excuse by lack of sufficient printing space at my disposal, but confess herewith that I am not, without more ado, and perhaps not at all, capable to replace these hints by more precise definitions."

Thematic Propositions as Guides to Scientific Thoughts

WE NOW NEED an important clarification. At the heart of the method of scientific discovery shown schematically in *Figure 1*, there was the leap up from the plane of experience *E* to the premises *A*. That leap, it was stressed, is logically discontinuous. But it cannot be entirely "free" after all, if the premises later are to pass the tests of naturalness and simplicity (and the like) in order to meet the second criterion for a good theory. In fact, the leap *is* channelled and guided.

One such guide, at least for Einstein himself, was given by the fact that he attained the concepts for use at the *A* level by a form of mental play with visual materials "to a considerable degree unconsciously"—by a powerful iconographic rationality which he added to the more conventional semantic and quantitative ones. Another guide in the leap from *E* to *S* is one shared by all scientists engaged in a major work on novel ground: the guidance provided by explicit or, more usually, implicit preferences, preconceptions, presuppositions.

Einstein himself saw this and commented on it repeatedly. A good statement occurs in the unpublished essay "Induction and Deduction in Physics" (probably written in the early 1920s):

"The simplest conception [model] one might make oneself of the origin of a natural science is that according to the inductive method. Separate facts are so chosen and grouped that the lawful connection between them asserts itself clearly. . . . But a quick look at the actual development teaches us that the great steps forward in scientific knowledge originated only to a small degree in this manner. For if the researcher went about his work without any preconceived opinion, how should he be able at all to select out those facts from the immense abundance of the most complex experience, and just those which are simple enough to permit lawful connections to become evident?"

It has always been this way. Otherwise we could not understand how Kepler could pursue astronomy so successfully even though his pre-Newtonian physics was so ineffective. While his instinct for physical problems was sound, his tools were not; and the total success depended on

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Kepler's ability to shift to and trust himself to frankly metaphysical presuppositions when his physical ones gave out. Kepler's effort would have been doomed if he had not supplemented the mechanistic image of the universe as a physical machine with two other, very different ones: the universe as a mathematical harmony, and the universe as a central theological order. These three guiding ideas or grand themata continued to echo in the work of the 17th-century scientists who followed Kepler, and indeed up to the delayed triumph of the purely mechanistic view in the completion of Newton's work by Laplace.

In this, as in every other case of major scientific discovery, we are led to recognise the existence of (and even the necessity at certain stages in scientific thinking of postulating and using) precisely such unverifiable, unfalsifiable, and yet not arbitrary conceptions or hypotheses, a class to which I have referred as thematic presuppositions. They lie, as it were, along a dimension orthogonal to the other two that are equally necessary for scientific work, those referring to the empirical and analytical content respectively. In Einstein's own scientific papers we can watch him stating his presuppositions boldly, as for example when he first announces his basic two postulates of relativity, almost brusquely declaring them to be hunches which he wishes to elevate to the status of postulates—without even bothering to connect them plausibly with the experimental material on the *E* level.

THERE IS, OF COURSE, another side to this thematic origin of scientific thought. Dedicating oneself to some presuppositions or themata means one is likely to exclude others, as Einstein indeed did when he refused to accept the themata that were so basic in the work of the Copenhagen school on Quantum mechanics. Just because they are not contingent on empirical ground, one can expect contrary themata to be vigorously held by opposing sides (as in the case, for example, of the theme-antitheme couple of atomism and the continuum). In the thematic conflict between scientists during the rise of Quantum mechanics in the 1920s, some looked to Erwin Schrödinger's introduction of wave mechanics as "a fulfilment of a long baffled and insuppressible desire" (as one physicist expressed it in 1927). Others abhorred this continuum-based approach and found satisfaction only in fundamental explanations rooted in the themata of discreteness. Both groups faced, on the whole, the same experimental data. But the passionate pursuits of their antithetical quests show the strength which the thematic attachment often has.

When one lists the general themes that have guided the process of scientific discovery of individual scientists and of the profession as a whole, one is struck by the antiquity and relative paucity of themata—by the remarkable fact that while the range and scale of recent theory, experience, and experimental means have multiplied vastly over the centuries, the number and kind of chief thematic elements have changed little. Since Parmenides and Heraclitus, the members of the thematic dyad of Constancy and Change have vied for loyalty, and so have, ever since Pythagoras and Thales, the efficacy of mathematical forms *versus* the efficacy of materialistic or mechanistic models. The (usually unacknowledged) presuppositions pervading the work of scientists have long included such thematic preconceptions as these: simplicity, order, and symmetry; the primacy of experience *versus* that of symbolic formalism; reductionism *versus* holism; discontinuity *versus* the continuum; hierarchical structure *versus* unity; the animate *versus* the inanimate; the use of mechanisms *versus* teleological or anthropomorphic modes of approach.

These, and not many more—a total of a few dozen singlets, dyads, or triads, none of them right or wrong in any logical sense—seem historically to have sufficed to direct the energy of the creative leap in discovery. Our pool of these imaginative tools is characterised by a remarkable parsimony at the fundamental level, joined by fruitfulness and flexibility in actual practice. Only occasionally (as in the case of Niels Bohr's "Complementarity" concept) does a qualitatively new theme enter into science, or is an old one discarded.

I do not have the space here to discuss the origins of these thematic presuppositions;[1] but we may well be bringing many of them to the science laboratory from our kindergarten. From a study by the school of Jean Piaget we know that in the psychological development of young children such ideas as conservation, or invariance persisting through apparent change, are an essential element of thought. So ingrained is that conviction that Henri Poincaré once said, when the law of conservation of energy was challenged: "We can be sure we shall find something that stays constant, and that we shall be able to call it energy."

WE CAN NOW SEE THAT much of the fight of the Priests of the Counter-culture against what they attack as overly rationalistic science is a sham—it is largely a fight against straw-men of their own making. They conceive of scientific rationality

[1] See Gerald Holton, *Thematic Origins of Scientific Thought* (Harvard University Press, 1973).

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as limited to strictly quantitative and semantic-logic processes. But that applies at most, and only to a degree, to Public Science, *i.e.*, to science as a pedagogical or as a consensus-seeking activity. What they attack is, however, only a poor caricature of the aspect of science I am here discussing—Private Science, the process by which reasoning men and women make discoveries. For there the discontinuous and thematic characteristics cannot be overlooked.

To allow those to be called "irrational" is to play with words. On the other hand, to let oneself be frightened into doubting the validity of thematic choices during discovery would indeed endanger the very process of discovery itself. So, also, would any limitation of individual thematic choice in order to accommodate differences in a collaborating group. In science at Stage Three, the chances of a team doing truly seminal work would be much decreased if the team had to limit itself to problems in which thematic presuppositions are not important, or where an adherence to a kind of thematic consensus, or lowest common denominator, is required.

Science as a Charismatic Activity

I NOW TURN to another characteristic of scientific discovery which assures its innovative vigour. That, to put it briefly, is the scientist's confidence stemming from his perception of an overall goal that transcends the narrow task at hand—and, in the limit, that serves science in its function as a charismatic activity.

To recapture this conception, we can do no better than look at the work of Copernicus himself. To be sure, Copernicus, like any other good astronomer, relied on observation and calculation. He greatly advanced mathematical astronomy in the technical sense. But that is hardly the whole reason why he came to write the work for which he has been honoured so long; nor does that explain its full power. In Copernicus's Dedication to Pope Paul III in the *De Revolutionibus* (1543), he spells out his purposes and themes which reflect that other side. Copernicus writes that he wanted to understand

> "the movements of the world machine, created for our sake by the best and most systematic Artisan of all."

And at the end of his outline, in concluding Chapter 10 of Book I, Copernicus exults: "So vast, without any question, is this divine handiwork of the most excellent Almighty." Nature is God's temple, and human beings (it is implied) can, through the study of Nature, discern *directly* both the reality and the design of the creator. This was a daring and dangerous idea; and it is significant that, when Copernicus's book was put on the *Index* of "Books to be Corrected", this last-quoted sentence was one of the relatively few deletions which were insisted upon as necessary. For it was equally clear to Copernicus and to his opponents that when the purpose of science is perceived large enough, it can become charismatic.

I use this now much debased word "charisma" (from the Greek word for *gift*) in its meaning of a special endowment conferred upon a believer as an evidence of the experience of grace, fitting him for the life and work to which he feels called. To be sure, it has not been fashionable during the past few decades to describe a motivation for scientific discovery in these terms. But without it we would miss the sense of exaltation in the beauty of the system as Copernicus might have seen it. In his forsaken corner of a miserable planet, Copernicus was persuaded he had found proof that the world is designed as a "beautiful Temple," one which (he thought) could only have been made by the Divine Architect himself. Again and again he declares his delight, "the unbelievable pleasure of mind." His very first sentence in the first Book of the *De Revolutionibus* is:

> "Among the many and varied literary and artistic studies upon which the natural talents of man are nourished, I think that those above all should be embraced and pursued with the most loving care which have to do with things that are very beautiful."

In such passages we sense the source of energy of a major scientific idea. It is not some pedestrian piecing together of a corner of the puzzle. Nor does the work give us just better astrometry and applications such as calendar correction, valuable though these are. Rather, the discovery is on a scale that produces an expansion of human consciousness—and it was so perceived by those who were converted to Copernicus's idea, above all by Kepler, who really became quite intoxicated by it. It is through that kind of energy that a scientific idea can change cultural evolution; and we have seen it again in the effect of a Darwin, Freud, or Einstein.

The themata that predominate in Copernicus's work are those of *simplicity* and *necessity*, and they appear in a stern manner that seems to have been new at the time but has become basic to all science since. As Copernicus proudly writes in the Dedication of the work, his heliocentric scheme for the system of planets has the property that

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> "not only their phenomena follow therefrom, but also the order and size of all the planets and spheres, and heaven itself are so linked together that in no portion of it can anything be shifted without disrupting the remaining parts and the universe as a whole."

Thus, if the orbits are measured with respect to the sun, Mercury has the smallest relative radius and the smallest period of revolution; and as one goes to more distant planets one finds their periods increase, until one arrives at the "fixed" stars, having an infinitely long period.

The power of this solution was precisely its restrictiveness. There is nothing arbitrary, no room for the smallest *ad hoc* rearrangement of any orbit, as had been quite possible in pre-Copernican work. Copernicus's system as a whole revealed a sparse rationale, a *necessity* that binds each detail to the whole design. Hence it carries the conviction that we understand why the planets are disposed as they are, and not otherwise.

ONE IS REMINDED HERE of Einstein's remarks to his assistant, Ernst Straus:

> "What I'm really interested in is whether God could have made the world in a different way; that is, whether the necessity of logical simplicity leaves any freedom at all."

It was not idly that Einstein once called himself a deeply religious unbeliever. He defined religiosity as confidence in the rational order and confidence that the human mind, at least to some degree, is open to the construction or discovery of reality.

In his essay on "Religion and Science" (1934) Einstein took pains to describe his idea of scientific religiosity, and it was one close to Spinoza's conception of religion. Einstein wrote that beyond the two more primitive stages of religion —that based on fear and that based on social and moral imperative—

> ". . . there is a third stage of religious experience which belongs to all of them, even though it is rarely found in a pure form. I shall call it cosmic religious feeling. It is very difficult to elucidate this feeling to anyone who is entirely without it, especially as there is no anthropomorphic conception of God corresponding to it [nor any dogma or church]. . . . I maintain that the cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research. . . . What a deep conviction of the rationality of the universe and what a yearning to understand, were it but a feeble reflection of the mind revealed in this world, Kepler and Newton must have had. . . ."

This kind of terminology, now rarely heard, is somewhat embarrassing to most scientists today. There are good sociological, psychological, and even political reasons why this should be so, why our usual list of motivations stresses the Baconian side of the heritage of modern science, the relief of man's estate, the discovery of cures, and the perfection of appliances, or simply the provision of a decent way to spend one's days on this earth. But the Baconian ethos, while necessary, is not sufficient; and by itself it does not help us understand fully the nature of high discovery. No one would argue that the personal language of Einstein should be introduced into our current scientific papers, not to speak of the far more theistic language of Copernicus, Kepler and Newton. In my opinion, it is quite enough that a quiet, underground current exists along the lines described by Einstein. It would be far more ominous if this cosmological or charismatic tradition were to dry up altogether, for that would indeed signal the decline of science.

Happily, it is not too difficult to glimpse the continued existence of this motivating tradition in scientific discovery at the fundamental level today, even if it may come to us in somewhat disguised form. Thus Dr Steven Weinberg, on receiving the Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Prize last year, said:

> "Different physicists have different motivations, and I can only speak with certainty about my own. To me, the reason for spending so much effort and money on elementary particle research is not that particles are so interesting in themselves—if I wanted a perfect image of tedium, one million bubble chamber photographs would do very well—but rather that as far as we can tell, it is in the area of elementary particles and fields (and perhaps also of cosmology) that we will find the ultimate laws of nature, the few simple general principles which determine why all of nature is the way it is. . . .
>
> "The reason I take such an optimistic view of where we are now is that Relativity and Quantum mechanics, taken together but without any additional assumptions, are extraordinarily restrictive principles. Quantum mechanics without Relativity would allow us to conceive of a great many possible physical systems. Open any textbook on non-relativistic Quantum mechanics and you will find a rich variety of made-up examples—particles in rigid boxes, particles on springs, and so on—which don't exist in the real world, but are perfectly consistent with the principles of Quantum mechanics. However, when you put Quantum mechanics together with Relativity, you find that it is nearly impossible to conceive of any possible physical systems at all. Nature somehow manages to be both relativistic and quantum mechanical; but those two requirements restrict it so much that it has only a limited choice of how to be—hopefully a very limited choice."

Copernicus would have understood this. And while any individual attempt of this sort is by no means guaranteed to be right, no other, less cosmological, approach is likely to lead to the truth either—and particularly not to a truth having the kind of exalting sweep that historically

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has given the scientific enterprise its real intellectual mandate.

TO CONCLUDE: The progress of science is threatened today not only by loss of financial support and of good people—which is bad enough; not only by diversion of too much of its energy to applied or engineering work that may not yet be bolstered by enough basic knowledge; and not only by the confusion and disenchantment of the wider public—and that, too, demands our concern, because some of it is surely due to a lack of proper attention on the part of scientists.

No, what seems to me to be the most sensitive, the most fragile part of the total intellectual ecology of science is the understanding, on the part of scientists themselves, of the nature of the scientific enterprise, and in particular the hardly begun study of the nature of scientific discovery. In this pursuit, our own day-by-day experience as scientists will help us if we set it into the historic framework provided by those who went before us. The celebration meetings for Copernicus's 500th anniversary reminded us that these forerunners of modern science have set for us the scale on which both scientific discovery in its most serious sense and science as a vocation are to be measured, and that they also gave us many of the themata that guide our work. Each time we make a speculative leap, channelled by such essential themes as harmony, ordered simplicity, or necessity—none of which are taught explicitly or appear in the index of our textbooks—Copernicus (and all the others who painfully tested the adequacy and limits of the themata we now use so naturally) stands unseen at our side, and guides us.

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To the Known God

Priests! you should not have left conjuring.
It is a healthy, relaxing art.
It is good to move among swarms of magic.

It is good to follow service day by day
And woo the god of that church with ceremonial suppers
With hymns ringing in the stone and blessed water
And see nothing and feel nothing
And pray to the unknown god

But it is also good for one learned in vestments
To visit the bonfire crackling like a released footprint
In the greenwood and the quiet persons gathering,
Polished antlers, glowing in the firelight,
Who speak to their priests as equals, some of whom are gods
With straight backs and animal heads

It is good to have one god running the daylight
And another running through the dark on great thews of venison
Who dines on the cooked venison
Who runs with the does made of venison
Who speaks with a venison tongue
Who created venison for his pleasure and yours.

Peter Redgrove

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LETTERS

Günter Grass's "Détente"

DECIDEDLY, ENCOUNTER's editors do not lack a sense of humour when they print in the same issue George Watson's relentlessly probing text on the volunteer intellectual dupes of the 1930s *and* Günter Grass's box, "Culture and the Détente" (December, 1973). A companion piece to the Watson article ought to be written (I pledge myself not to write it) pointing out for Mr Grass's benefit the following: first, that his words echo (style '70) those quoted by Watson (style '30); that it is not quite "up-to-date" to wonder why the Soviet régime allows no free expression to writers; that the strait-jacket worn by the Russian people is not "Leninist-Stalinist", but simply "Marxist"; that détente, like peaceful coexistence, is (viewed from the Kremlin), not a cosy get-together, but a tactical weapon, used before by Lenin (NEP), by Stalin (alliance with the West and dissolution of the Comintern 1941–1943), and by Khrushchev (Camp David); that the Russians in all likelihood would love to return to private capitalism, and must wonder why only Mr Grass should enjoy its benefits; that East and West are not "criticisable" in the same way and to the same degree (Grass may consult Solzhenitsyn in this matter); that threats like "if Moscow does not improve its ways, its image will be damaged", must cause hilarity in the Kremlin and, finally, that the Soviet régime is not "socialist" but a combination of Marxist totalitarianism and Oriental despotism.

After the Red Thirties there followed at least the red-faced Fifties. But Mr Grass seems to have forgotten the one and the other and not to have learned from Prague, the Brezhnev doctrine, the divisions ready to intervene in the Near East. A truly amazing performance which, however, will not prevent him from receiving the Nobel Détente Prize. If not, there may be other consolations. Forty years from now, in ENCOUNTER's sixtieth jubilee year, there will be an article, "Were the Intellectuals Duped? The 1970s Revisited." So Mr Grass has no cause to worry: posterity *will* remember him.

THOMAS MOLNAR

City University,
New York

Hobgoblins & Little Minds

YOU SEEM TO HAVE an ambivalent attitude toward Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In a previous issue you credited him with an observation that rightly belonged to Thoreau. Now, in your January issue (p. 44), you take away from him one of his most famous sayings—"consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds"—and give it to Andrew Sarris, a movie reviewer! [Isabel Quigly, "The American as Movie Critic"].

What ENCOUNTER giveth with one hand it taketh away with another, being consistent only in being wrong.

RICHARD HANSER

NBC Television,
New York C

OF COURSE, Emerson, sensible soul that he was, wrote "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds," but Sarris omits the epithet "foolish", presumably because to his mind any sort of consistency seems absurd.

JOHN SIMON

New York

BERNARD LEVIN tells me that long before Andrew Sarris, Ralph Waldo Emerson made the remark about consistency being the hobgoblin of little minds; which may explain why (presumably because it sounded faintly familiar) it had such a pleasant ring to it. Not that I am alone in misquotation, or rather misattribution, because in her latest book of interviews Oriana Fallaci attributes it (or something much like it—it looks slightly different in Italian: *"La coerenza é la virtu delle piccole menti . . . "*) to John Locke. Is it a case of the subconscious buzzing away in Sarris (and presumably in me, and perhaps in Oriana Fallaci), or did he think it so well known that it needed no attribution? Or is it just my bad luck, out of nearly 500 closely printed pages of Sarris, to pick the one second-hand sentence?

ISABEL QUIGLY

London

Crossman's Pollsters

MR RICHARD CROSSMAN is what my American friends call "a lovely human being." He is also most entertaining and readable ["Are the Political Pollsters Doing a Serious Job?" and "A Reply", ENCOUNTER, October 1973 and February 1974]. But I'm afraid we are still in total disagreement.

He claims to believe that newspapers insist on their polls using a technique ("clustering") which deliberately increases their error. They don't; to do so would be strangely masochistic.

He claims to believe that newspaper editors, not the pollsters, frame the questions to suit their own special purposes, and are only interested in polls as "high-class tipsters", not as a way of measuring public opinion, attitudes, or indeed anything of any real substance.

These views, he claims, are "entirely based" on the book by Frank Teer and James Spence which he was reviewing. He writes that I must have forgotten, or not read the book. I therefore quote James Spence with his authority:

> "Mr Crossman completely misunderstood what we said about clustering. Given a fixed sample size clustering does, of course, increase sampling error. But, given a budget to spend, a larger clustered

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sample will almost always have a lower sampling error than a smaller unclustered sample costing the same amount. In other words the benefit to be derived from increasing the sample size is greater than the loss in accuracy due to clustering. We made it clear in our book that clustering was, rightly, a standard technique used not only by opinion polls but in the great majority of market, social, and opinion surveys, whether carried out by commercial organisations or Government institutions.

"By quoting what we had written about editorial control out of context Mr Crossman gave an exaggerated and distorted impression of how a questionnaire is designed. His statement that the questions 'are decided by the editors of the papers which finance them and the reports are composed expressly to provide the right kind of news stories for the papers in which they appear' is certainly quite untrue."

Thank you, Mr Spence.

HUMPHREY TAYLOR

Louis Harris International Inc., London

Daniel Bell on the "N.Y. Schools of Sociology"

A Reply to Lewis Feuer

I NOTICE WITH increasing bewilderment, and with even more increasing dismay, Mr Lewis Feuer's effort in the pages of ENCOUNTER to construct a "New York School of Sociology", his use of my name as a "member" of that "school", and, even more incomprehensibly, his knowledge of what was "clearly" in my mind, in some writings for *The New Leader*.

All of this may be bewildering as well to an English audience, but since the editor has opened his pages to these exchanges, and some unwary historian of the cenacles of American sociology might, on some future occasion, be tempted to use this information, let me state a few things "clearly" for the record.

Mr Feuer constructs the New York School out of five names: Seymour Lipset, Nathan Glazer, Philip Selznick, Alvin Gouldner and myself; and he links the five, in some odd fashion, both to "The Trotsky problem," and to Robert Merton's influence. A "school" implies common beliefs and common meetings. But this is not so of the individuals Mr Feuer names.

OF THE FOUR, I never knew Gouldner in the 1940s or 1950s and met him, in fact, only once when I had a long discussion with him, as I sought to puzzle out how he could equate functionalism with Marxism, as he tried to do at the time. I knew Selznick, casually, at City College, where he was an intermittent student, but since he was a Trotskyite and I was not, we rarely had any discussions. It was only a decade later that we met frequently, and thus long after he had left New York. Both Lipset and Glazer were at City College a few years after my student period and I only came to know them, independently, in the late 1940s when Glazer was an editor of *Commentary*, to which I was a contributor, and in the early 1950s when Lipset was an assistant professor at Columbia and I was a lecturer there.

Mr Feuer writes that the Trotsky problem was "clearly" in my mind in my first essays for *The New Leader*, written in a "Burnhamite gloom." My first essays for *The New Leader* were in 1938, when Burnham was a Trotskyite. I don't recall *ever* writing on "the Trotsky problem" for *The New Leader*, and certainly not as a "Burnhamite" (whatever that would mean). If there was a writer who, for a variety of reasons, independently engaged the attention of Selznick, Lipset, and myself, it was Robert Michels and his thesis regarding the impossibility of democracy, even in socialist organisations. I wrote my major graduate school paper on Michels. Lipset wrote his *Union Democracy* book to test the Michels thesis, and Selznick wrote his study of TVA with the problem of "co-optation" (a word he introduced into the sociological vocabulary from his background in left-wing politics) as a result of his preoccupation with Michels.

AS TO THE INFLUENCE of Robert K. Merton: I did my graduate work at Columbia from 1939 to 1941 before Merton came to Columbia, and the major influences on my thinking were principally Robert MacIver, whose pupil I was, and the Frankfurt School, which was then housed at Columbia. I was one of the few sociology students who faithfully attended the Horkheimer Tuesday evenings seminar, and I collaborated briefly, with the Frankfurt Institute in an unpublished study of Anti-Semitism in the American labour movement. In 1945, I read a paper at MacIver's evening seminar on British élites, which was praised by Merton, who I met there for the first time. And it was only a half-dozen years later that I came to know Merton well.

If there is a moral to all this it is that we should resist the temptation to myth-making which allows us to reconstruct the past on the basis of half-remembered imaginings. Mr Feuer who is usually so meticulous in his intellectual research should have guarded himself doubly against this temptation.

DANIEL BELL

Harvard University

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The Ideological Pilgrimage

IDEOLOGICAL PILGRIMAGES, so brilliantly examined by Paul Hollander [ENCOUNTER, November 1973] seem to have influenced quite a few travellers outside the intellectual community. This, at least, is the impression one gets while reading accounts of some American executives returning from guided tours in China.

No lesser figure than David Rockefeller confided to the readers of *The New York Times* (10 August, 1973) that upon arrival in the People's Republic of China "one is impressed immediately by the sense of national harmony." Mr Rockefeller based that impression primarily upon the "loud patriotic music", a kind of revolutionary Muzak heard everywhere, and upon the "very real and pervasive dedication to Chairman Mao and Maoist principles." Mr Rockefeller, together with five other members from his Chase Manhattan Bank, spent only ten days in China which—he admits—is like trying to see New York City "in less than one-and-a-half minutes." Yet, this was obviously sufficient time for him to conclude that "the social experiment in China under Chairman Mao's leadership is one of the most important and successful in human history."

While not without reservations towards "some grey areas and contradictions" such as "cultural and intellectual constraint" and rigid economic policies, the Chase Manhattan Bank chairman leaves no doubts about his conviction that he visited a great place and that "whatever the price of Chinese Revolution, it has obviously succeeded" not only in economic terms but also in "fostering high morale and community of purpose." Readers of Hollander's article need not be reminded that praise for Stalin's state in the 1930s was almost identical.

Another example of U.S. business executive evaluation of China appeared in *Advertising Age* (17 September 1973), a magazine more interested in techniques of selling than political philosophy. But it so happened that Mr Early Ludgin, boss of an advertising agency in Chicago and a trustee of the University of Chicago, visited China as member of a group sponsored by the university's Woman's Board. Having looked at China as an American adman, he later told his colleagues in business that China had "no need for advertising men." This, we can assume, he probably knew before the trip. Mr Ludgin also confesses that as a way of life communism "would be unthinkable for Americans." Nonetheless, he writes, "one conclusion that we came away with was that communism is proving to be successful in China", a country "incredibly well organised." Some of Mr Ludgin's fellow advertisers might have been puzzled by the nature of an ideology which is "unthinkable" for Americans but good for 800 million Chinese people who are also human beings, as other pilgrims have been good enough to assure us.

Fortunately enough, what some executive travellers fail to see, some of their assistants accompanying them to China seem to recognise rather quickly. Namely, that many of the real problems of Mao's state are simply not displayed for pilgrims' eyes and remain behind an inpenetrable wall. A member of a business negotiating team who speaks Chinese fluently and was in China as interpreter for his company's president recently told a group of students at my university the following story. He attended Sunday morning mass in the only Catholic church now open in Peking and all the people present were foreigners. Talking to a Chinese official later, the American visitor expressed his desire to attend church again but at a different time when mass would be conducted for local people. The following dialogue developed:

> CHINESE OFFICIAL: "No, this would be difficult because Catholic mass for our people starts very early."
> AMERICAN VISITOR: "But I don't mind getting up very early. I can come from my hotel any time."
> CHINESE: "It would be too early for you."
> AMERICAN: "No, believe me, I can come any time and would like to come. When does it start?"
> CHINESE: "All right. When would you like to have it?"

It does look as though Eastern political Meccas could choreograph and stage almost anything for eager and grateful pilgrims from the West.

JIRI NEDELA

Graduate School of Communication,
Fairfield University
Fairfield, Conn.

Proles & Pilgrims

ALTHOUGH I agree with Paul Hollander's conclusion (ENCOUNTER, November 1973) that the dissatisfaction and alienation of intellectuals stem from a surfeit of leisure, I doubt, as a "Prole" of long standing, that their occupation with "time-consuming routines" would dampen their ideological ardour. Soul-destroying endless routine with no hope of relief (and the despair of being forced to endure this daily grind until 65—an age when body and mind have been so bruised in the execution of dull toil that retirement means a mere fading out) can contribute to the same state of mind as that of the Intellectual Pilgrim. Paul Hollander, as an ivory-tower intellectual, cannot be aware of the *malaise* prevalent in offices and workshops which hinges on the conviction that we "Proles" are (as Mailer so rightly remarks) "fragmented personalities in a dehumanised system." When human beings are robbed of dignity and self-respect the quality of life is diminished in our society, and in an effort to foster and preserve that quality ideological individuals will set out on pilgrimages in search of Utopia.

The intellectuals Paul Hollander cites have proved to have been misguided, but initially their aim was sincere. The fault appears to be that they did not collaborate to set their own house in order. A common error which is not exclusive to intellectuals.

It seems to me that J. R. L. Anderson made a positive move to enhance self-respect in that splendid article, "Has Unemployment a Future?" (November 1972). It went straight to my proletarian heart. He qualified his arguments with humanity, wisdom, and sheer down-to-earth common-sense. Long may he write.

(MISS) E. BUCHANAN

Manchester

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Barzun's Milton & Comenius

JACQUES BARZUN has stated ["Arguing about Education", ENCOUNTER, November 1973] that Comenius's methods were published by Samuel Hartlib and approved by Milton. While Hartlib approved, I don't think that Milton did. In Milton's essay "Of Education" (1644) he makes the rather caustic remark that "to search what many modern *Januas* . . . and *Didactics* have projected, my inclination leads me not."

Furthermore, in Comenius's *The Great Didactic* one finds a system of gradation: subjects are keyed to the capability and age of the student. In "Of Education" Milton unloads an avalanche of subject-matter that should be taught without making any effort to sort it out.

Comenius and Milton view the student quite differently. For Comenius, "Every man is able to get to the top of an high Tower . . . if there be steps for him to ascend by; but take away some few steps, and he is presently at a stand; or falls into a precipice." (*A Reformation of Schooles*, 1642). Thus the mind of man could reach quite unexpected heights of grandeur if cautiously guided in the slow, steady ascent upward. As one eminent Milton scholar (D. M. Wolfe) asserts: "The only genetic gold he [Comenius] cherished was infinite teachability." Milton, like many classicists of his period, felt that a child was bequeathed a fixed, unchangeable quantity of innate intelligence. I doubt if Milton would accept any doctrine of "infinite teachability." For Milton not everybody possessed the native equipment to make the laborious ascent.

As a person convinced of his own intellectual superiority, Milton would hardly accept Comenius's rather optimistic estimate of the average man's infinite plasticity. If the heaven of *Paradise Lost* consisted of "Orders and Degrees", so would the earth.

While my statements have no bearing on the conclusions of Professor Barzun's admirable essay, I think they are worth making as he did devote a rather substantial section to Comenius.

MELVYN L. ROGERS

Bronxville,
New York

MR ROGERS is quite right. I should not have written that Milton *approved* of Comenius's views on education. But in the letter to Hartlib which is Milton's tract on the subject, the doctrine that things not words should form the basis of all instruction parallels (if it does not follow) the teaching of Comenius. And since Hartlib had been conversing with Milton and promoting Comenius for several years before Milton wrote, there is a presumption in favour of, let us not say influence, but reinforcement.

JACQUES BARZUN

Columbia University,
New York

Tagore's Tiger

MAY I RAISE ONE SMALL but I think important point in connection with this most interesting article "Restoring Rabindranath Tagore" in your January issue? Mrs Lago quotes:—

Bâgh âche âm-bone
Gâye châkâ châkâ dâg

and translates it as:—

In the mango-grove the tiger
On his body round round spots

and contrasts this very favourably with the equivalent in an American book used for the education of her children. Unfortunately for her argument the tiger does not have round spots or indeed spots of any shape but only stripes. Is this simply a mistranslation or an error on the part of Tagore or simply poetic vagueness?

In any case most English children, and I hope even American and certainly Bengali ones, would very early on deride parents and teachers who thought tigers had spots—hardly conducive to respect for the art of reading. Did it never occur to her when silently reciting the lines that they in fact made nonsense in spite of their delightful sound?

A. E. G. HAWKINS

London

Dayan & Zionism

LOOKING FOR A MAGAZINE which deals with literature and politics, I bought a copy of the June 1973, ENCOUNTER.

Here I read a fascinating review of Moshe Dayan's biography which is called "The Soldier, the Man, the Legend." Unfortunately as I have read and heard some speeches of Dayan and I have listened to some of his television interviews I am very doubtful about Mr Shlomo Avineri's article.

With all the moderation that Mr Avineri has put in his article Dayan is a Zionist and regardless of human rights in Israel.

I am not an Arab or a Jew, and to my mind a non-Jewish state is as wrong as a Jewish state; therefore I do not see any justification for the tremendous injustice that has been done to the Palestinians in which a Minister of Defence plays a great role.

Of course Dayan could be admired because he is a clever soldier. Well, so was Napoleon; so was Marshal Rommel. I only hope that the book has mentioned some of Dayan's military orders, his sabotages or his guerrilla acts, and his responsibility for the massacre and obstruction of the civilians whose sole fault was being ordinary people.

I would be very sorry indeed if your paper backs Zionism. I do hate injustice and I don't believe that yesterday's scriptures are worth sacrificing today's life for.

S. SAMADIZABH

London

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London

QUESTION TIME: Is *(Alan Brien writes in "Alan Brien's Diary")* **Timothy Leary, now serving up to 15 years in California, a prisoner of conscience—the American Solzhenitsyn? If not why, not?**

SUNDAY TIMES

Windermere

RHYME AND REASON: *Experts are examining a parchment, thought to contain an original poem in the handwriting of William Wordsworth, which has been recovered from beneath the foundation stone of a Windermere school. The school is being demolished to make way for a new road.*

Accounts of the stone-laying ceremony in 1836 show that Wordsworth put a bottle containing silver coins and a signed scroll beneath the foundation stone. Mr Cyril Makin, of Bath, a former curate of Windermere Parish Church, says he has seen records that the bottle also contained a poem.

Mr Jim Palmer, a demolition worker, of Oak Street, Windermere, said yesterday: "There is definitely a poem on the parchment because we could read some of it through the glass and it rhymes."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

STICKLERS: Lord Goodman's telegram was approved by the authors and publishers present: He ignored some small shrill dissent from a lady writer or two, but recognising that the telegram was not approved "unanimously", suggested the adverb "massively", then good-humouredly accepted shouted advice that "overwhelmingly" was a better and more accurate word. Sticklers for the *mot juste*, **these writing chaps.**

EVENING STANDARD

London

ACADEMIC JOKE: *Psephology was launched by Professor R. B. McCallum with his study of "The British General Election of 1945." But it still needed to be named. McCallum and a colleague invented the word as an academic joke, using the Greek word "psephos," a pebble, in allusion to the Greek method of voting by casting a pebble into an urn. McCallum amused himself with the thought that psephology would be taken by intellectual snobs to be an ancient discipline that everybody familiar with classical literature should know about.*

THE TIMES

Tel Aviv

TRANSLATION: The Israeli Government is to publish, for the first time, the Old Testament in contemporary Russian. A Ministry of Religious Affairs spokesman said in Tel Aviv yesterday that because of the amount of research required, the first edition would not be ready until January 1975.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Johannesburg

BOYS: A white Johannesburg business man, Mr Mannie Kaufman, said yesterday that a traffic officer had refused to allow his son—bleeding to death after a car accident—to be taken to hospital in a blacks-only ambulance. The wrong ambulance was sent after someone had reported that "two boys" had been injured. Ambulance officials assumed that this meant Africans. The boy died.

THE GUARDIAN

Paris

QUEENSMANSHIP: *Aldous Huxley would not have agreed with Freud's theory "that chess was essentially a masculine game because it permitted the male player to act out his Oedipus complex by destroying the king-father" [Waverley Root writes]. He once wrote that chess had obviously been invented by a woman because (1) the whole object of the game is the protection of the king, and everything stops when he can no longer be saved; (2) for the protection of the king, the most powerful piece on the board, the dominator of all others, is the queen; (3) the female admiration of the military is betrayed in the dashing move of the knight, and (4) the far-reaching influence of the bishop arises from the penchant women have for men of the cloth.*

This last would not work in French, where the bishop is called the madman. On second thought, maybe it would.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

O THE PITY OF IT: Comforting news for readers of the *Morning Star*, **the Communist daily newspaper. Tony Chater, who will become the paper's editor in the summer assures me: "There will be no change in policy." So the party line will be held.**

The editor-designate is a mild-spoken, greying man of 44, a former lecturer in physical chemistry. He joined the party in 1949 and went to work for it full time in 1969. He has no experience in full-time journalism.

With such a large potential readership base, it is a pity that the paper's circulation is only about 50,000.

THE TIMES

London

GUILTY VERDICT: *A man jailed for three years for possessing cannabis was freed by the Appeal Court yesterday because the foreman of the jury which convicted him was confused and "unable to understand simple English."*

Lord Justice Lawton said this was one of the "hazards of trial by jury," and quashed the sentence. He said that he believed, after hearing the appeal, that the foreman of the jury, because of questions he asked at the trial, did not know the difference between the meaning of the words "verdict" and "guilty".

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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